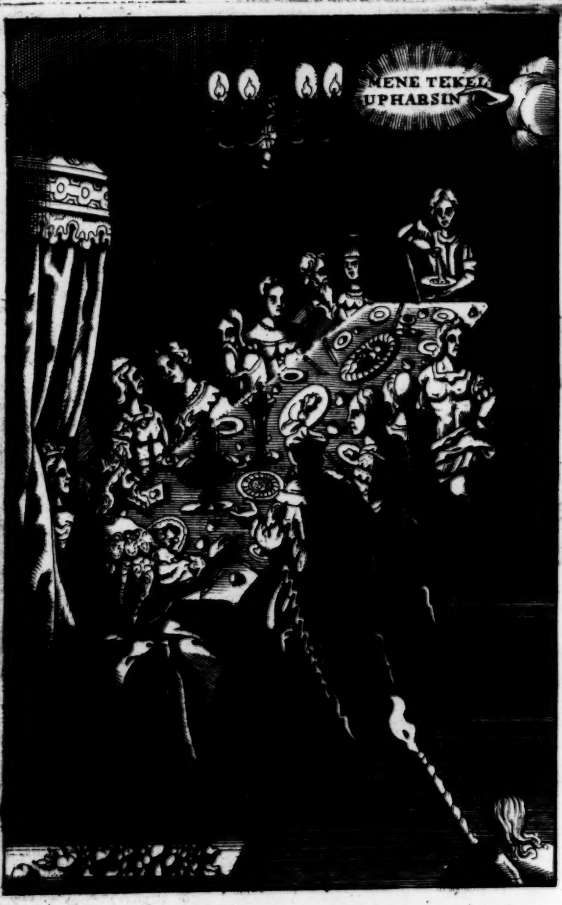
MENE TEKEL
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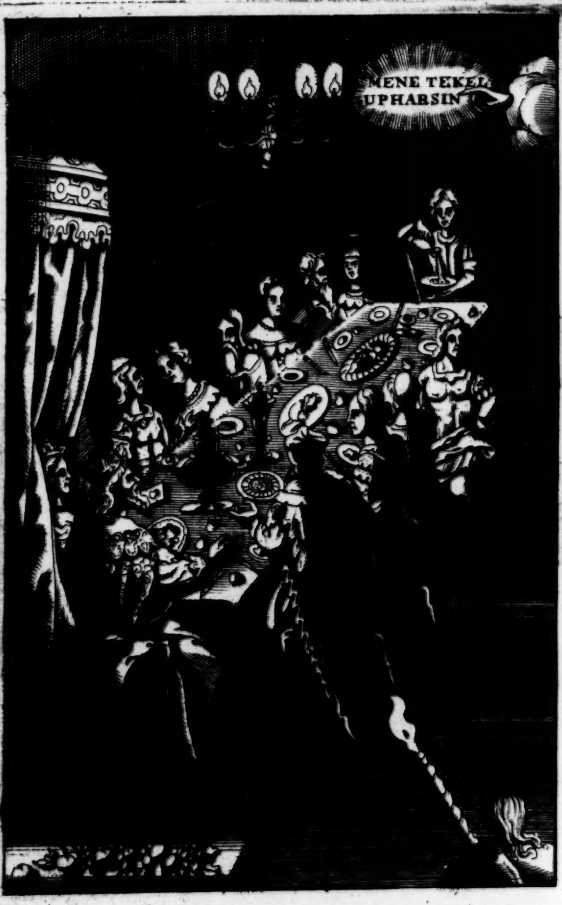
MENE TEKEL
UPHARSIN

THE

SIRENES;

OR,

DELIGHT

AND

JUDGMENT.

Represented in a

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Great Day of Judgment.

And its Power to Damp and Imbitter Sensual Delights, Sports and Recreations.

By ANTHONY HORNECK, *D. D.*
Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

The second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged.

LONDON:
Printed by *H. Clark*, for *Henry Mortlock*,
at the *Phœnix* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1690.

The PREFACE.

THough Practical Writers have this advantage of Controversial, that they do not make themselves so many Enemies, as the other, yet I know not, what the fate of the ensuing Discourse may be: For tho' the subject relate to Manners, and the Behaviour of Men, as Christians; yet it is to be feared, that not a few who think themselves Religious, and notwithstanding their pretended Piety, securely bathe themselves in Delights, *this Book condemns, may put no very favourable construction on such endeavours, as being levell'd against things, they are used to, and the Humour of the Age hath allowed of, and rendred unquestionable; and such it's like will call these attempts, pragmatical, and bid us, as* Constantine *did* Acesius *in another case, erect a Ladder to Heaven, and climb up thither by our selves.* Socrat. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 7.

But it's God's Mercy, that while Christianity is decay'd in the Glory and Brightness of its Life, the Bible is still among us, and that we are not to regulate our Religion by the sickly Fancies of half Christians,

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But it's God's Mercy, that while Christianity is decay'd in the Glory and Brightness of its Life, the Bible is still among us, and that we are not to regulate our Religion by the sickly Fancies of half Christians,

but by the ſtanding Laws of that Jeſus, *whoſe Diſciples we profeſs our ſelves to be, and whom the Primitive Believers thought themſelves obliged to follow in external, as well as internal ſimplicity.*

It's true, the Church is not now under Perſecution, as it was in former Days, when Men made thoſe mighty Progreſſes in Self-denial, but it is to be obſerved, that when the Saints of the firſt Ages preſſed thoſe Severities, they did not lay the ſtreſs on their perſecuted Condition, and the neceſſity of the diſmal Times they lived in, but on the Laws of their great Maſter, which they look'd upon to be as immutable, as the God that gave them: Nor can proſperity make any alteration in thoſe Leſſons, which Chriſt required as Eſſential to his Religion; Proſperity indeed was intended to prompt us to a more cheerful diſcharge of our Duty, but not to a neglect of thoſe Auſterities, which are the beſt Ornaments of the beſt Religion in the World.

As Men have managed Proſperity, it hath been the greateſt Bane of Religion, and the wiſeſt Men have taken notice how Chriſtianity ſince it hath crept out of the Thorns & Briars of Barbarous Tyranny and Oppreſſion,

hath

hath been unhappily decreasing in its Zeal, and Fervour; Whether it is Fable, or History that tells us, that a Voice came from Heaven, saying, This Day Poyson is poured out into the Church, *when Ease & Plenty, and Rivers of Gold flowed into it, I shall not now enquire; Certain it is, that external Felicity hath smilingly undermin'd the Foundations of that admirable Doctrin, and that which was formerly built on the greatest Innocence, hath since changed its bottom, and stands too much on shew, and formality.*

Prosperity at this Day, to the great Sorrow of all considerate Persons, gives Law to Mens Religion, and whatever crosses Prosperity, is thought to cross Religion too. What is consistent with our ease, is allow'd of as good Divinity, & whatever runs counter to our sensual Satisfaction, appears so aukward, that we fancy it no Religion, because Flesh and Blood would not have it so; all which must necessarily arise from Unbelief, or a wavering Faith of a Life to come; either that future Life, the Son of God hath purchased, and promised, is not look'd upon to be so great, as it is represented in the Gospel, or it is not seriously thought of; for if it were, the Pleasures of this

Life would grow pale, and their Beauty vaniſh, if compared with the glorious delights hereafter; and the Satisfactions of this World would ſoon loſe their Charms, if view'd by that Light, which irradiates the Holy Cherubim: *If that Life deſerves not Self denial in the Pleaſures of this preſent, Chriſt and his Apoſtles muſt needs have been out in the lofty Deſcriptions, they have given of it, and our Faith is vain; and in vain did the Son of God take all thoſe pains, and ſuffer all the Agonies he did, to purchaſe a thing ſo trivial, and inconſiderable.*

If it were a thing of no great moment, the but moderately Pious, would not be excluded from its Glories; But when nothing but Heroick Virtue can promiſe it ſelf a ſhare in that Felicity, it cannot be otherwiſe, but that the Prize doth anſwer the difficulties in the purſuit of its attainment. They are Great and Maſculine Acts, that Chriſtianity prompts us to; and wherein can this Heroick Vertue be expreſſed better than in a Noble contempt of what fooliſh Mortals count pleaſant and tickling to their Fleſh and Fancy? Such acts are arguments of a brave and

generous

generous Mind, and ſigns that our underſtandings ſoar above the Moon, and rely more on what God hath promiſed, than on what the World for the preſent pays. This ſhews that our Souls do act like themſelves, and not to be biaſſed by vulgar Sentiments, is that which gives a Man Reputation with the Beſt *of* Beings.

Chriſt in preſſing theſe Leſſons, hath only made a clearer Revelation of what the Philoſophers *of old gueſſed at by the glimmering light, which Nature gave them, and what can be more for a Man's Credit, than to do that, which both Nature and Grace have judged to be moſt honourable and glorious?*

There is no Queſtion, but if that Eternal Life hereafter, were ſhewn in all its Glories, and Riches, and Contents to a ſenſual Man at the ſame time, that he beholds the moſt charming delights of the Fleſh; and had he as lively a view of the one, as he hath of the other, the infinite brightneſs of the one would ſo eclipſe, and darken the feebler ſplendour of the other, that he would not only be content to quit his inferiour delights for the enjoyment of the other, but would very much

wonder

wonder at that Monſter, that ſhould refuſe the greater for the leſſer pleaſures; ſo that all the difficulty is, how to make that Eternal Life ſo viſible, that it ſhall move, and affect, and preponderate above all Earthly ſatisfactions. And the way to do this, is the ſame with the Method, that muſt be taken in making the Day of Judgment viſible to us, which is the attempt of the following Diſcourſe, in which I hope I have ſaid nothing but what is agreeable to the Doctrin of the Primitive Church. If any ſhall find fault with ſome paſſages in it, becauſe they contradict the Vanity and Luxury of the Age we live in, or charge me with medling with things, which do not belong to me to determine, all I ſhall reply, is this, that I have done no more, but what I have excellent Precedents for, even ſome of the beſt Divines of our Church ſince the Reformation, whoſe Example as I am not aſhamed to follow, ſo ſince they thought it their duty to diſcourage ſuch Vulgar Errours, it cannot be a Crime in us to follow their Faith, knowing the end of their Converſation.

THE

THE SUMMARY Of the whole DISCOURSE.

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II. What there is in that future Judgment,

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1. Becauſe

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Advertiſements of two Books, Publiſhed by the Reverend Doctor Horneck, *and Sold at the* Phœnix *in St.* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

THE *Happy Aſcetick*: Or, *The Beſt Exerciſe.* To which is added, A Letter to a Perſon of Quality, concerning the Holy Lives of the *Primitive Chriſtians. Octavo.*

THE *Exerciſe of Prayer*, Or, *A Help to Devotion*: Being a Supplement to the Happy Aſcetick, or beſt Exerciſe. Containing Prayers and Devotions, ſuitable to the reſpective Exerciſes: With Additional Prayers for ſeveral Occaſions. *Twelves.*

THE

THE SIRENES: OR, Delight and Judgment.

Eccles. xj. 9.

Rejoyce, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thy Heart, and in the sight of thine Eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.

THere is no Man certainly better able to give us so true an Account of the Nature, Extent, Danger, Exit, and End of sensual Pleasure, as *Solomon*, the Son of *David*; a wise Son of a wise Father, a Man wise to a Prodigy, wiser than all the Children of the East, to whose comprehensive Brain nothing came amiss; whose penetrating Mind contained the whole circle of Arts and Sciences,

and whose insatiable desire after Knowledge, made him enquire into the Nature of Sin; and not content with the speculation of the Delights it caused in corrupted Souls, ventured even upon the practice of them; he walked through the whole Garden, tasted of all the Fruits, smelt to every Flower, and I believe many times sinned, not so much out of fondness to the Sin, as for Tryals sake, to acquaint himself with the Nature of the Folly, and to see, whether there was really that satisfaction in it which the brutish part of the World said there was: But while he tried Experiments upon the Viper, the Beast flew into his Face, and poyson'd the *Empirick*. He went on in these slippery ways, and walk'd on this Sea of Glass a considerable time, spread the Sails of his sensual Desires, and bid his carnal Mind ask and crave whatever it could fancy, and if either Love, or Money, or Force could procure it, it should have it. He hugg'd all the little shooting flames he met with, and kissed every thing that had the name and reputation of Mirth and Jollity.

But

But ſee the ſad *Cataſtrophe*, and woful turn of that pleaſant Wheel; when he thought himſelf in *Paradiſe*, he found himſelf in *Hell*, and that which *tickled* his Senſes at the firſt, *proved* after ſome time his greateſt torment and vexation. Providence can be ſilent for a time; but at laſt the ſleeping Lion wakes, and roars ſo, that all the Beaſts of the Field do tremble; and *Solomon*, on whoſe Head the Candle of the Lord had ſhined ſo long, found that Light at laſt go out in a Snuff, and himſelf the Object of Gods wrath and indignation; he found by ſad experience, what it was to abuſe the Wiſdom God had beſtowed upon him, how dangerous the Paths were he had walked in, what it was to pervert the End and Deſign of the Gifts of God; and what darkneſs and confuſion it brought upon Men, and that makes him impart this ſad *Memento* to the Man who hath Blood, and Youth, and Strength enough to be vain and fooliſh; *Rejoyce, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the days of thy Youth*, &c.

By way of Explication, I must take notice of these few things:

1. That the words *young Man*, and *Youth* in Scripture, especially in this Book, are בחור בחורות not only meant of that time we commonly allow to Youth, which is from Ten or Fourteen to Twenty or Five and Twenty, but include all that Age which is fit for Action, and the Hebrew words import so much, being derived from a Root, implying Choice and Election; so that the time here aimed at, is the most vigorous time of our Life, or that time which any Man of Sense would chuse for Action.

2. That those Sentences which sound like Exhortations, are perfectly Ironical, or spoke by way of *derision*, as if we should say to a Man, *Go play the Fool, burn thy Finger in the Candle, and see what thou wilt get by it*; whereby, we do not mean that he should do so, but do rather express the silliness and simplicity of the thing, to make him avoid it: And such Ironical Expressions, or mocking Exhortations are very frequent

frequent in Scripture; as, 1 *Reg.*18.27. *Cry aloud, for he is asleep;* which is a kind of mocking the stupid Priests of *Baal*, that called on a Stock or Stone; so, *Jer.* 49. 11. *Leave thy Fatherless Children, and let thy Widows trust in me, i. e.* Ay, go, comfort thy self with this, that I will take care of thy Fatherless Children, and provide for thy Widows, but thou shalt find thy self egregiously mistaken; So 2 *Cor.* 12. 13. *For what is it wherein you were inferior to other Churches, except it be, that I my self was not burdensom to you? Forgive me this wrong*; *i. e.* If I did wrong you in doing so, it was a very pleasant Wrong or Injustice, for which you have more reason to thank me, than to be angry with me. So here; *Rejoyce O young Man*, &c. *i e.* go play the Mad-man, let thy sensual Appetite rove, gratifie thy Flesh, please thy besotted Heart, fix thine Eyes on what Beauty thou thinkest fit; sing Care, and Reason, and thy Wits away, and see what the Issue of all will be; and so much is evident from the following words, which are a Bridle

to all these Extravagancies, and the Gall that embitters all these Sweets; and therefore the *Chaldee Paraphrase* justly turns these Mock-exhortations into a serious Admonition; *Walk in humility, let not thine Eyes gaze upon that which is evil, but be exceeding cautious*; and so the *Septuagint*; *Walk spotless in the ways of thy Heart, and not in the Lust of thine Eyes.*

3. God brings a Man into Judgment two ways, either by causing his Conscience to awake with horror in this life, and laying some other heavy Affliction upon him, and there is Mercy in this Process; for this may yet lead the forlorn Soul to serious thoughts of Repentance, bring the Pangs and Throws of the New-Birth upon her, and deliver her into a New-Creature: *Or*, where God intends a higher degree of Wrath, and Indignation, he lets the jovial Sinner alone on this side Hell, and the burthen shall not fall on him, till he comes to look the angry Judg in the Face, at which time, as the Surprize will be greater, so the horror and anguish

of

of Mind, which will seize on the Sinner, will, like *Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace*, prove seven times hotter than ordinary; upon which follows eternal Despair, and endless howling and gnashing of Teeth.

The Result of all, is this Proposition: *That the Prospect of a future Judgment is enough to embitter all the sensual and carnal Delights of Men, particularly of young Men, and to bring a Damp upon the most youthful and most jovial temper imaginable.* Not only the Sense of the Text, I have already laid down, imports so much, but there is this farther in it, that the Wise-man seems to couch his Argument plainly thus; Do but take a view of that dreadful Judgment God is resolved to bring thy guilty Soul to, and thou wilt not dare to indulge thy self in the mad rejoycings of thy Youth, nor walk in the ways, and after the Fancies of thy corrupted heart, nor suffer thy wanton Eyes to fix on those Objects, from which God hath bid thee turn thy Face away.

You know the Story of the young Gallant, who riding by a lonely *Hermit*'s Cell, and finding the ſolitary Man very devout and fervent in Prayer, and looking with a ſevere and mortified countenance, called to him, *Father, Father,* what a Fool are you to debar your ſelf of the charming Refreſhments and Pleaſures of this Life, and live here immured within Walls of Mud, and Clay? What if there ſhould be no other world, to what purpoſe is all this Rigor and Mortification? The *Hermit* heard him, ſmiled, and replied, Ay, but Friend, What if there ſhould be one, where are you then? What a Fool will you be then? How will you wiſh, that you had been in my condition? The Youngſter ſtartled at theſe words, went home, left his Women, and his Swine, his Luſts, and dry Husks of brutiſh Delights, and like the Prodigal, became another Man.

The Truth is, we have ſeen this proſpect of a future Judgment, have very ſtrange Effects upon a Man, who was not apt to be frighted with ſad *Prognoſtications,* and that was *Felix,* a Perſon,

who

who had drunk as deep of the ſtolen Waters of Senſuality, as any Man then living; for he lay in the embraces of *Druſilla*, who was another Mans Wife, and enjoy'd that Beauty which his luſtful Appetite deſired, without Lett or controll: His Greatneſs bore him out in the commiſſion of the crime; and whatever Cenſures the ſoberer part of men might paſs upon him, his Grandeur over-aw'd them, that they durſt not ſpeak aloud of his Impiety, and all men flatter'd him, and himſelf drowned all the internal twitches and ſtings of Conſcience with noiſe, and pomp, and multitude of buſineſſes; yet, behold, when S. *Paul reaſoned of Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and Judgment to come,* the Text ſaith, *Felix trembled.* The Sermon awaken'd the notions of Divine Juſtice, that were engraven on the Tables of his Heart, made him uneaſie, put him into conſternation, and for the preſent forced him to loath the Bed where his abomination was wrought. Acts 24.25.

We

We are told of a Cuſtom in ſome Kingdom, that the night before a condemned Malefactor is to die, a very ſhrill Trumpet ſounds before the Priſon-door, which is a certain ſign that he is to die next day; and before whoſe door ſoever the fatal Trumpet ſounds over night, no Prayers, no Tears, whatever Condition he is of, or whatever Figure he makes in the world, can ſave him from being executed.

It happen'd in proceſs of time, that the King who had made this Law, after he had ſtreamed out a conſiderable part of his Life in extravagant Actions, on a ſudden became ſerious, was often ſeen to retire into his Cloſet, gave ſtrict Order for extermination of all Vices; and though before he had doated on Mirth, and Jeſts, and ſenſual Satisfactions, yet theſe were now all abandon'd, and turn'd into a Scene of Gravity and Sobriety: Such an alteration, we muſt think muſt be a very ſtrange ſurprize to Courtiers; who, impatient of this change, and ſuppoſing it to be a Fit of Melancholy, took the freedom to ask him, what

the

the reaſon of this Reformation was? The Kings Brother eſpecially, none of the moſt Religious, ſought often to divert him, tempting him to ſee Shows, and Plays, and Women, and ſuch Baits as ſerved either to plant or cheriſh Vanity in his Mind and Affections, but all in vain.

One Night, the King deſirous to bring his Brother to a better Senſe of ſpiritual things, bids the fatal Trumpet to be ſounded before the jolly Princes Houſe, who, ſenſible of the meaning of that noiſe, that he was to die next morning, ſtarts out of his Bed, throws by his ſtately Robes, puts on a ragged Garment, weeps Rivers of Tears, and a mighty horror ſeizes his Mind, and as ſoon as it was Day, comes to the King in this poſture, and intercedes for his Life: To whom the King ſaid, O Brother, are you frighted with the ſound of this Trumpet, which foretels my Subjects approaching and inevitable Death, and doth this Noiſe force you into Tears, and Sackcloth, and humble Supplications, and can you blame

me

me for being ſerious, who know not how ſoon the Archangels Trumpet, of far greater conſequence and importance than this, will ſound in mine ears, and ſummon me and you, and all my Subjects to the Judgment-Seat of God, and perhaps to eternal Deſpair and Agonies? Go home, ſaid he, and by my example learn to deſpiſe the World, and prepare for that Day.

But this Subject will invite us to a larger Diſcourſe, and therefore it will be neceſſary to enquire,

1. What Reaſon we have to believe, that there is a Day of Judgment.

2. What there is in that future Judgment that's able to caſt a damp on the Mirth and Jollities of Men, eſpecially the younger ſort.

3. How the Proſpect of that Judgment muſt be managed, that it may actually damp and put a ſtop to theſe carnal Delights.

4. Whether every Man is bound to embitter his carnal Delights with this Proſpect.

5. Whether

5. Whether upon this account a man be obliged to mind nothing that ſavours of worldly Delight and ſenſual Satisfaction.

1. What reaſon have we to believe that there is a day of Judgment?

Having to deal with Chriſtians, at leaſt with men that profeſs themſelves ſuch, this Query ſeems needleſs; for the Scripture, which the Chriſtian world pretends to believe to be derived from God, is full of Paſſages of this Nature, and aſſures us, that this Belief of a future Judgment, is as ancient as the Creation of the World; *For* Enoch *the ſeventh from* Adam, who in all probability had it from his Anceſtors, *propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with Ten Thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him,* Jude *v.* 14, 15. And this Faith hath been followed by all the ſucceeding Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, and

and judicious Men, was confirmed by the great *Meſſiah*, the Lord *Jeſus*, and his Apoſtles, who gave us a more lively deſcription of it, and hath ſince been entertained by all the Chriſtian World, at leaſt in profeſſion, though there are but few that act and live like perſons influenced or over-aw'd by that Belief; ſo that if Chriſtians keep cloſe to their Principles, it can be no difficult thing to perſwade them to believe that which they imbibe with their Mothers Milk, and Education advances into an open Profeſſion and daily Declaration.

But we have ſeen, and do ſee a ſtrange degenerateneſs in moſt Chriſtians, and not a few that go under that Name, though they do not openly queſtion this Truth, yet they either live as if they did, or Infidelity reigns ſecretly in their hearts; and it is to be feared, that whatever their Tongues may ſpeak, in their Minds they are not fully perſwaded of it.

And were ſuch Men willing to be perſwaded, it ſhould be no contemptible Argument to convince them, one would

would think, that the greateſt part of the World is of that Belief, not only *Chriſtians*, but *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and the *Heathens* themſelves; that it is a grand Article of the Jewiſh Faith, none can deny that ever convers'd with them; that the *Mahometans* are ſtedfaſt and ſincere in their Aſſertion, and clear in this Point, any one may ſee that hath read their *Alcoran*; and that the Heathen World is no ſtranger to it, appears from what their *Sybilline* Oracles, their *Philoſophers* and *Poets* have profeſſed.

The *Sybilline* Oracles indeed are ſuſpected by Learned Men, and looked upon as Pious Frauds, uſed by the Fathers, thereby to convince the Heathens the better of the Myſteries of Chriſtianity; though it will not enter into my head, how the Fathers could have confirmed any of their Doctrines from theſe Oracles, if the Heathens they had to deal withal, either were not ſatisfied that thoſe things had been ſpoken by their *Propheteſſes*, or had believed that the Fathers had foiſted thoſe Oracles into the *Sybils* Writings, which either

either were not, or had never been there; for this would have been so far from being an Argument against the Pagans, that the Christians would have laid themselves open in nothing so much, as in these Quotations, had they been false or suppositious.

Plat. in Phad. However, *Plato*'s Writings have been conveyed to us without any signal corruption, and he gives us a very accurate Account of this great Day, as *Hydaspes*, an ancient King of the *Medes*, had done before him, and the Heathen Poets, though indulging their Fancies in some things; yet have delivered many excellent Truths to us, whereof this future Judgment is not the least; we need go no farther than the Sixth Book of *Virgils Æneids*, where the Opinions of the Ancient Heathen Sages are collected and expressed in Verse; and it is worth observing, that he makes his Judge *Rhadamantus* inflict particular punishments on those Souls that have deferred their Repentance to their Death-Beds.

And

And how can we imagine, that the whole World, at leaſt the wiſer part of it, ſhould ſo unanimouſly believe a future Judgment after this Life, if either there had not been a great propenſity in their Nature, to believe the Notion, or Reaſon had not convinced them of the Certainty and Reality of the Thing: If we grant, that God hath given a Law to Man, we muſt neceſſarily grant, that there muſt be a Judge to call thoſe to an account, who have violated and broke thoſe Laws. Man we ſee is capable of being governed by a Law, and without a Law to govern him, would run wild, and become a meer Brute, we muſt therefore neceſſarily believe that God hath given us a Law; and what Law more ſutable to his Nature, or the Principle of Reaſon, than what we have in the Bible, which is indeed the Law of Nature, expreſſed in livelier and more legible Characters? It is fit therefore, there ſhould a time come, when the Obedience and Diſobedience of Men may be taken notice of, and

the Obedient rewarded, and the Diſobedient puniſhed. God hath made Man his *Viceroy* here on Earth; to which purpoſe *David* ſaid, *Thou haſt ſet him over the Works of thy Hands, and haſt put all things under his Feet*; and Experience ſhews, that Man hath a dominion over all irrational Creatures; and is it not convenient, that at the end of the world, when all Men have acted their part on this Stage, this *Viceroy* ſhould be examined, and asked, how true he hath been to his Sovereign King? What he hath done with the Creatures which have been given him for his uſe; And whether he hath not minded his own buſineſs more than his Maſters?

Pſal. 8. 6.

If there is no Judgment to come, there can be no God; for without a future retribution this God cannot be juſt, and a God that is not juſt, is imperfect, and if imperfect, he cannot be God; ſo true is that Saying of *Averroes*, That whatever is moſt noble, and moſt praiſe-worthy in Man, muſt be attributed to the beſt and greateſt Being, God bleſſed for

for evermore; Juſtice we ſee, is that, which makes a Prince on Earth great, and is one of the higheſt Perfections he is capable of, which was the Reaſon that when *Ptolomy* asked the Seventy *Interpreters* of the Jewiſh Law, What King lived freeſt from fear and violence? He was anſwered, He *that exerciſes Juſtice, puniſhes the Bad, and rewards the Good*; and conſequently this Juſtice muſt be aſcribed to God, as the moſt perfect Being: It would be the moſt unreaſonable thing imaginable, that thoſe who love and fear him moſt, ſhould be moſt oppreſſed, and go without reward; and thoſe that abuſe and diſhonour him, ſlight and undervalue him, ſhould live proſperouſly, and never feel his Diſpleaſure or Indignation. If God be wiſe and juſt, this cannot be; and ſince this reward of the Innocent, and ſeverity on the Wicked, is not adminiſtred and diſpenſed in this World, it muſt needs follow, that it muſt be in another, and the day of this future recompence, we call the Day of Judgment.

And though the Apprehenſions of that vaſt multitude of Men, which believe or profeſs it, about the manner and method of this day, be very different, yet it is enough, that all agree in the thing, even thoſe who have not the revealed Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; from whence we may juſtly fetch the trueſt and exacteſt deſcription of it, thoſe Revelations and Writings the Chriſtians have, and what is ſaid in them concerning the Righteouſneſs of God, being moſt agreeable to the Nature of God, and the Actions of Men, and the Rules, the Supream Architect hath engraven on our Reaſon.

That there are ſome Men, who deny a future Judgment, we need wonder no more than we do, that the Fool ſhould ſay in his heart, *There is no God.* That which makes a Man deny the one, tempts him to be bold in disbelieving the other. It is the true Intereſt of a ſinful Life, there ſhould be no Retribution; and how can a Man act againſt God with any chearfulneſs or alacrity, except he puts him out of his thoughts,

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and to compleat the Folly, fancies that he will never call him to a reckoning. Its Mens Vices that are the cauſe of their Atheiſm; and were it not, that they are enamoured with their Luſts, their Reaſon would ſoon joyn iſſue with theſe Verities: It is not for want of Arguments that Men are Unbelievers in this knowing Age, but for want of Sobriety and conſideration; and while they ſuffer themſelves to be drawn away by their ſenſual Appetite, no marvel, if in time, their Fleſh incroaches upon their Underſtanding, and their brutiſh Deſires corrupt their very Reaſon, and they begin to think, that God is altogether ſuch a one as they themſelves. Love to Vice darkens the Underſtanding, which is never clearer than when Virtue governs the Man; Its Notions then are clear, and the Reaſonableneſs of the things unſeen appears without ſhadows and uncomfortable obſcurities. Vice by degrees clouds the Mind, and Love to that makes the Man firſt regardleſs of thoſe Truths; ſoon after he queſtions thoſe Verities, and he begins

gins to doubt whether he hath not been impoſed upon all this while, and at laſt he ſinks into a downright denial. The Devil we may ſuppoſe is not idle in theſe caſes; and having firſt debaucht the lower Faculties, he ſoon corrupts the higher; and the Sinner once in the Net, comes to be involv'd in greater dangers, not to mention that a juſt God withdraws his Light, and Spirit, whereby the Soul falls into greater Darkneſs. But let's ſee,

2. What there is in the proſpect of this future Judgment, that is able to damp the greateſt Mirth and Jollity.

1. In the proſpect of this Judgment, there appears a very ſerious Judge, even the mighty *Jeſus*, the Son of God, who was ſeen to weep often, but to laugh never; even he that came into the World to teach men Self-denial in ſenſual Pleaſures, not only unlawful, ſuch as Wantonneſs, Effeminacy, Fornication, Adultery, Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, Feeding our Eys with Luſtful Objects, and which produce ill Deſires in us, Deriding and Jeering our Neighbors

bors for their Infirmities, Luxury in Cloathing, Eating and Drinking, Mimick Geſtures, Filthy Jeſting, Love-tricks, Talking looſly, *&c.* But in ſome meaſure in Lawful alſo, eſpecially where a greater good is to be promoted, and hath bid us uſe theſe outward Comforts as if we uſed them not, and rejoyce in them as if we rejoyced not, with fear and cautiouſneſs, that they draw not our hearts away, and with a generous indifferency, as Perſons who have laid up their Treaſure in another World, and look for the Bleſſed Hope, and the Glorious appearing of the great God.

Such a Judge appears in this proſpect; one who deſcended into this valley of Tears upon the moſt ſerious Errand imaginable, even to call Sinners to Repentance, to make them ſenſible of what God expects at their hands, to convince them, that they have Souls to be ſaved, to aſſure them, that though God is patient, yet he will not be everlaſtingly affronted by bold and daring Men, and judges otherwiſe of things than beſotted Mortals, and is in good earneſt,

when he bids them ſet their Affections upon the things which are above; one who will not be put off with fooling, nor ſpare a Malefactor for a jeſt; one who gave Mankind a Being and Habitation here, not to play, but to work, not to mind Trifles and Rattles, but the Concerns of a tremendous Eternity; a Judge, whoſe Eyes are like Flames of Fire, and his Feet like Braſs glowing in a Furnace, who was indeed a Lamb when he had his converſation here on Earth, and like one was led to the ſlaughter, not opening his Mouth, and is ſtill ſo to all thoſe that take his Yoke upon them, and learn of him to be humble and meek, but will at laſt appear in all the Robes of Majeſty which the Clouds of Heaven, and a Guard of Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand Angels, and all the Light of the Throne of God can furniſh him with.

This Judge knows all the Secrets of our Hearts, and before him all things are naked and open, and no Creature can hide himſelf; he is one who cannot be impoſed upon by Sophiſtry, nor

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nor wheadled into a wrong Judgment of things by equivocation; whose presence will shake the World, and put the greatest Captains and stoutest Souldiers into Fits of Trembling, and make them cry to Rocks and Mountains, *Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sits upon the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.*

This Judge is not to be corrupted, nor to be bribed; cannot be carried away with outward respects, which make Judges here on Earth pervert Judgment; these judge too often according to Affection, and call white black, and black white, good evil, and evil good, defend vice under the notion of virtue, rashness under the name of fortitude, lazineſs under the colour of moderation, and timorousneſs under the title of cautiousneſs; these do too often become advocates for the Prodigal, and call them liberal and generous; the covetous with them pass for frugal; the Lascivious for Courtiers; the Talkative for affable; the Obstinate for Men of resolution, and the Dull and Idle for persons who

who act with great deliberation: Love to their Kindred and Blood, makes them extenuate Faults in their Relations, and that which appears an inexpiable crime in Strangers, seems but a peccadillo or infirmity in a Child or Brother: *Herod* hurried away with his Amours to *Herodias*, beheads the innocent *Baptist*; *Flaminius* out of Love to his Harlot, violates the Publick Faith; *Julius Cæsar*, out of fondness to *Cleopatra*, gives Sentence against her Brothers; *David*'s inordinate affection to a Rebel-Son, tempts him to give the Army charge to take care of the young Man *Absolom*.

But the Judge we speak of, is of another temper; it was his Character here on Earth, that he was *no respecter of Persons*; nor could the Sons of *Zebedee* prevail with him to place them, one at his right hand, the other at his left; and it was not Kindred he would advance to that Dignity, but such for whom it was prepared by his Father: Hence it was, that his Mother and Brethren found no farther acceptance with him, than they were obedient to his Word;

Word; and he deliver'd it as his Eternal Rule, *They that do the will of my Father, they are my Mother, and Brethren, and Sisters*; and with this Motto he gave a *Reprimand* to the Woman that cried, *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked; yea, bleſſed are they*, ſaid he, *who hear the Word of God, and do it*: And he that here on Earth could not be wrought upon by Kindred, or Conſanguinity, nor blinded by Affection, ſure will not be miſled by theſe falſe Fires in the great Day of Judgment.

Judges here on Earth, if Paſſion, or Hatred to a Man, reigns in their Minds, are too often tempted to paſs wrong Sentences: What the Effects of *Progne's* hatred to her Husband *Tereus* were, and how the innocent Son ſuffered by it; how dire the hatred of *Medea* to *Jaſon* was, and drew the death of their Children after it; how *Joſeph's* Brethren condemned that guiltleſs Soul, meerly becauſe they hated and envied him; and how the *Jews* dealt with our great Maſter the Lord *Jeſus* upon this Princi-

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ple, both Civil and Sacred Hiſtories do ſufficiently manifeſt. But this impotent Paſſion cannot light upon him, who is to be the Judge in the laſt Day. He hates nothing that he hath made, and is ſo great a lover of all Mankind, that he would have *all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledg of the Truth*, and would give them all Eternal Life, if they would but take the way he preſcribes them. The Devils themſelves, could they be penitent, would be received into favour; and let a Man be born of a *Jew* or *Turk*, if he do but bring forth fruits meet for Repentance, neither his odious Name, nor loathſome Kindred ſhall exclude him from his boſom.

He hath no ſecret Spleen or Pique againſt any Perſon living; and though God under the Law ſeems to vent a particular diſpleaſure againſt the ſeven Nations, and eſpecially againſt the *Amalekites*, yet it was for their monſtrous and unnatural Sins, that his juſt Diſpleaſure roſe againſt them, not any private Grudge, or Envy he bore to them

them as Men, above other of his Creatures.

Such Imperfections are not incident to our Judge, who deteſts and abhors no perſon, but what makes himſelf deformed and odious to his purer Eyes; and *in every Nation whoſoever ſerves him, and works Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.*

Fear very often prevails upon Governors and Men in Office here upon Earth, that they dare not ſpeak their mind in paſſing Sentence, for fear of offending a Favorite, or loſing their Places, or being accounted pragmatical, or miſſing ſuch a Preferment, diſtorts their Judgments, and makes them take wrong meaſures of things. This makes Laws Cobwebs for great Men, and Traps to catch leſſer Animals; this tempted *Pilate* to crucifie the Holy *Jeſus*, and though he was ſenſible of his Innocence, yet the word, *If thou let this Man go, thou art not* Cæſar's *Friend*, turns the Scales, and makes him comply with the Fury of the People: But

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ſuch Fears cannot fall on this Judge of the whole Earth: Whom ſhould he fear? Of whom ſhould he be afraid? He is omnipotent: Will a Painter be afraid of his Picture, or a Man of his Shadow? Man is but God's Picture, and his Shadow, and ſhall the Almighty be afraid of his own Creature, whom he can cruſh into Atoms, into nothing with a frown? Who can make this Judge happier than he is already? What place can any Creature promiſe him, who doth what he pleaſes in all the Armies of Heaven, and among all the Inhabitants of the Earth? There is no careſſing him with Gold; for all Men and women will appear before him poor and miſerable, deſtitute of that Pomp, and Grandeur, and Finery, on which here they doated; and ſuppoſe they could carry their Wealth with them to the great Tribunal, what can they give him, who commands all the Treaſures of the World, whoſe is the Earth and the fulneſs thereof, and who is himſelf the giver of thoſe things which Mankind prepoſterouſly place their happi-

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neſs in? Here the greateſt Emperors and Princes muſt appear without their Guards, without their Armies, without their Swords and Spears; Here Popes muſt leave their triple Crowns behind them, Kings their Diadems, Biſhops their Miters, Noblemen their Lacqueys, and all ſtand naked and unarmed before the Throne; and ſuppoſe that Men were permitted to come with their former Retinue and Attendance into the preſence of the Almighty, yet this would cauſe no fear in our Judge, who will come attended with an innumerable Company of Angels, one of which did once ſlay one hundred fourſcore and five thouſand Men in the *Aſſyrian* Camp.

Such a ſerious, ſuch a magnificent Judge appears in the proſpect of that future Judgment, even *Jeſus*, the Son of the living God. He who was once deſpiſed and rejected of men, will at this time ſit on the Throne of Glory, and all Eyes ſhall ſee him; and though God himſelf is ſometimes ſaid to be the Judge, ſometimes *Chriſt* as Man, ſometimes

times the *Apoſtles*, ſometimes the *Saint* in general, ſometimes even wicke men; yet this implies no contradiction In God no doubt, lies the Sovereig Power, and no Creature can either ab ſolve, or condemn without his Will and Order; and this his Power of judging in the laſt Day, he hath committed t the Son of Man, or to Chriſt as Man whom he hath not only made Heir o all things, but for a reward of his Suf ferings, given a Name above every Name, and delegated him to be Judge of the Quick and the Dead; and this glorious Commiſſioner calls in the *Apo ſtles* in the firſt place, and all other Saints after them, to ſit with him on the Bench, and by their Suffrage to ap plaud the Sentence he ſhall paſs on the ſtubborn and obſtinate; wicked men ſhall be Judges only comparatively, as the Means of Grace they had, were leſs powerful than thoſe of their Neighbors, and yet went beyond them in Goodneſs and Holineſs, at leaſt were not ſo bad as they; and conſequently ſhall be wit neſſes againſt them, and in a manner judge

judge and doom them to unſpeakable anguiſh, becauſe they trampled on the Grace which was offered to their Souls, in which ſenſe the men of *Nineveh*, and the Queen of *Sheba* ſhall riſe in Judgment with that generation, who ſaw the Miracles of Chriſt, and repented not, and condemn them, becauſe a greater than *Jonas*, a greater than *Solomon* was here.

2. In the proſpect of this Judgment, there appears a very ſtrict examination of what we have done in the Fleſh, not only of viſible Actions, but of Words ſpoken in ſecret, and Thoughts, Deſires, Intentions and Reſolutions of our Hearts; an Examination, which will be a very great ſurprize to the Sinner, who hath made light of things of this nature; for *there is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, neither hid, that ſhall not be brought to light*, ſaith he that underſtood this Day better than any Man living, *Luke* 12. 2.

Not only the bigger Crimes, ſuch as Murder, Adultery, Fornication, Blaſphemy, unnatural Luſt, Stealing, Perjury,

jury, Atheism, Idolatry, Apostasie, Cursing, Swearing, Drunkenness, Extortion, Covetousness, Contempt of God, and of his Word, &c. will here be manifested and censured, aggravated and searched into, but the secret Lustings of the Soul, the hidden things of Dishonesty, the cunning Craftiness of men, whereby they lay in wait to deceive; the Mines and Pits men have privily digg'd for their Neighbors, their underhand Dealings, their Chamber-Practices, their sinful Contrivances in the Dark, or in their Closets, their sailing to the Port of Vain-Glory by a side-wind, their speaking Truth for ill ends, their Misinterpretations of their Brethrens Words and Actions, their reporting things to anothers prejudice; all these will be laid open before the whole World.

Sinner, thy unchast Embraces, thy impure Wishes, thy wanton Glances, thy lascivious Looks, thy Delight in amorous Songs, thy acting thy Lust over in thy Mind again, thy ruminating upon thy last Nights Revelling, thy tempting thy self

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Sin, and being thine own Devil, and thy committing impurity with thy self, will all be set in order before thee, and the Judge will demand, how it was possible for thee, who didst profess thy self a follower of the Chaste and Holy *Jesus*, to dishonour him and his Religion with such extravagant Actions, and irreligious Proceedings? Thy Slovenliness in Devotion, thy Hypocrisie, and seeming to be better than really thou wert, thy inattentive Prayers, the wilful Wandrings of thy Thoughts when thou wast speaking to God, thy not redeeming the Time, thy neglecting to observe the greater and weightier Matters of the Law, thy mispending thy precious Hours, thy Idleness and Laziness in Gods Vineyard, thy not giving to the Poor according to thy ability, thy Pride, and secret Envy, and desire of Applause, and finister Ends and Designs in Preaching, Praying, Administring and Receiving of the Holy Sacrament, and in other good Works, thy Flattering, and Dissembling, and Unwillingness to do good when thou hadst

a fair opportunity; these will all be laid open to thy sorrow and confusion. Thy not being led by good Examples, thy slighting wholesom Admonitions, thy laughing at excellent Counsel, thy scorning Reproof, and hating him that gave it, thy resolvedness to do that again for which thou wast reproved, the delay of thy seriousness, thy suffering the convictions thou hadst to be choaked with the Cares and Riches of the World; thy being at an Ale-house when thou shouldst have been in thy Closet, thy being at a Play when thy Hand and Heart should have been lifted up in holy Supplications, thy being in Bed when thou shouldst have been upon thy Knees, and neglecting a greater Duty for a Trifle or Impertinence, the Supper of the Lamb for Farms and Oxen, and thy preferring the silliest and most ridiculous Discourses before a Conference about the momentous concerns of Eternity; these will all be rehearsed at large: *For I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment,* saith

saith Christ, *Matth.* 12. 36. Not having repented of things of this nature, either through unbelief or careleſneſs, when theſe points ſhall come to be examined, and thy Soul interrogated upon theſe Particulars, and ſo many too, it ſtands to reaſon, that it muſt neceſſarily cauſe very great aſtoniſhment; for theſe things were moſt certainly forbid in that Goſpel thou didſt profeſs, and that notwithſtanding, as if ſuch things had never been ſpoken of, thou ſhouldſt ſlight them and undervalue them, and not think them worth thy care to ſhun them; what ſad reflexions will this Examination cauſe?

In vain doſt thou hope that Eagles catch no Flies, and that God will never mind ſuch ſmall, trivial and inconſiderable Errors. He that minded theſe ſmaller Faults, as they ſeem to carnal men, and took notice of them in this life, may juſtly be ſuppoſed reſolved to call men to an account for them in that ſolemn Day of Reckoning; for indeed God's Proceedings here are an Emblem of his proceſs in Judgment hereafter.

Eating of the forbidden Fruit in Paradiſe, ſeem'd but an inconſiderable overſight; yet did God curſe the very Earth for that Fact, made it bring forth Briars and Thorns for the future, condemned *Adam* to the eating of Bread in the Sweat of his Brows, and threatned the Woman, his Partner in the Error, to multiply her pain and ſorrows. It doth not appear from *Moſes*, that the Children of God, or Profeſſors of the true Religion did any more than marry with the Daughters of the prophaner Crew, a ſmall fault, a brutiſh Man would think; yet was the Inſolence laſh'd, and the inordinate Fire quencht with a Deluge of Waters; *Lot*'s Wife looks back to *Sodom*, out of curioſity perhaps, a venial Folly, natural to women, it ſeems to be, and no more; yet for doing ſo, ſhe is turn'd into a Pillar of Salt: *Achan*, as a Souldier, (and that ſort of men, we know, live much upon Prey) takes in a time of War a golden Wedge, and *Babylonian* Mantle (no great matter one would think) yet God orders him to be ſtoned; *Uzzah*,

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out of his over-care that the Ark might not fall, lays hold on't, to ſupport it; yet for ſo doing, is ſtruck with Death immediately; the *Prophet* who came from *Judah* to Prophecy againſt the Altar of *Bethel*, in ſuffering himſelf to be perſuaded to eat Bread, by another Prophet, who pretended Viſions too, to ones thinking, committed no great Crime, yet God revenged his Diſobedience with a violent Death; for a Lion, ſent by God, ſlew him. *Moſes* grows impatient at the Waters of *Meribah*; Who would not have done ſo that had to deal with ſo ſtubborn a People? yet that Act of Miſtruſt and Impatience coſt him the loſs of the Land of *Canaan*, he had ſo long deſired to behold; the People of *Iſrael* murmured in the Wilderneſs, a thing that People might eaſily do who were kept ſo long in a barren Deſart, without ſeeing an end of their Travel, yet of that vaſt number of Six hundred thouſand Men, not one enters into the Promiſed Land, ſave *Caleb* and *Joſhua*; *Ananias* and *Sapphira*

ſeemed to be guilty of no great Miſdemeanor; for they were content to give half of their Eſtate to the poor, but kept the other to themſelves; yet is God ſo angry, that he puniſhes their violating of their Vow to give all, with ſudden Death. Go now, Sinner, and fancy, that God will not call thee to an account for Faults the World makes nothing of; becauſe he doth not do it here, he will certainly do it hereafter, and the Examples of the Bible are *Items*, that he will do ſo.

It's no matter, whether the thing, in which the offence is committed, ſeem inconſiderable or no, the diſobedience is all in all; if God commands thee to avoid a thing that's trivial, its the eaſier Task to do according to his Will; and becauſe it was ſo eaſie to obey, and thou wouldſt not, its that which makes thy diſobedience grievous and heinous, tho' the matter of the offence ſeems mean and contemptible. *Rebellion is as the ſin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornneſs is as Iniquity, and Idolatry*, ſaid *Samuel*, in a

1 Sam. 15. 23.

caſe

case much like this; where the thing done by *Saul*, was so far from seeming ill, that it appeared like a Work of Mercy, and an Act of Gratitude; for he spared the best of the Sheep, and brought home *Agag* the King alive in Triumph; yet this excused not the Fact, but rather aggravated it; for *hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-Offerings, and Sacrifices, as in the obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams*, as the Prophet tells him, *v.* 22.

This confirms the Method of Christ's proceeding in the last Day; and indeed how could that Judgment be perfect, if the lesser, as well as the greater Errours were not to be accounted for, and mens disobedience against the lesser, as well as the greater Commands of the Gospel, was not to be manifested and proclaimed before the World? And though this is chiefly to be understood of men who die without sincere Repentance, yet it is more than probable, that even the sins

of

of those who were justified and sanctified, will be brought to light, and discovered before the vast Assembly that shall appear before the Throne of God in that Day; not that they need fear any hurt or disadvantage that will arise from that examination and publication, but by these means both the Glory of God, and the Glory of these true Converts will appear more illustrious; the Glory of God, who hath snatch'd such Persons like Brands out of the Fire, pull'd them out of the miery Clay, in which they were ready to perish, and taken them out of the Devils Clutches, than which, there cannot be a greater sign of the power and goodness of God; and who sees not how much it will be for the Credit and Honour of the Saints themselves?

For to let the World see first the Bands and Ropes that once held them, and how, like *Samson*, they broke them all, and carried away the gates of *Gaza*, and escaped out of Hell in despight of all the Devils, that raged and stormed, and domineer'd there; What can be

said

ſaid more for their renown and glory? What hurt doth the penitent *Mary Magdalen* receive by the *Evangeliſts* recording, or our ſpeaking of her former Whoredoms? No more will the revealing of holy Mens faults and errors in the laſt Day, eclipſe, but rather advance their goodneſs, becauſe they extricated themſelves from the Snare of the Fowler, and generouſly rouzed themſelves from their fatal Slumber, and in deſpight of Temptations, would preſs towards the Mark of endleſs glory. Their Errors being publiſhed, with their true Repentance, and Change of Life, juſtifies God in accepting of them, while he refuſes others, and proclaims their Wiſdom in chuſing the better part, and condemns the impenitent, and diſcovers how juſtly they are left to Gods Vengeance, who would in deſpight of all the Offers of Gods favour, prefer their Dirt and Traſh before an inviſible, laſting and ſolid Felicity; And though its true, that holy mens Sins are ſaid in Scripture to be covered, and God is brought in, promiſing to remember

their

their Sins no more, but to drown them all in the depth of the Sea, yet can the meaning of such Passages be no other than this, that God will not remember them, so as to make use of their Errors against them to their ruine and condemnation; notwithstanding this, he may justly publish them, that their Wisdom being compared with their Folly, that may appear to go beyond this, and themselves from the thoughts of their former Sins, may reap the greater comfort; as *Agathocles*, being advanced from the Trade of a Potter to a Throne, at his Meals would still make use of Earthen Pots, not only to remember his Original, but from the contemplation of his former poor and miserable Condition, to increase his present satisfaction; for as in our fall from a high degree of Prosperity, to the greatest Poverty and Misery, nothing torments the Mind more than the Remembrance that once it was otherwise with us; so, where Providence is so kind, as to bring us out of a horrible Pit, and sets our Feet upon a Rock, the re-

remembrance of our former Misery signally increases our Joy and Comfort in the present Mercy.

So then, in this great Day all mens Sins will be examined and published, though with different effects; the Penitents, to their absolution and glory; the Impenitents, to their terror and condemnation; for to be presented there with a List of innumerable offences and Affronts of the Divine Majesty, which their own Consciences know and must acknowledg, which yet they either never seriously thought of, or never seriously attempted to forsake; or if they repented, discovered only a mock-repentance; what effects can this be supposed to cause, but monstrous confusion, and horror of mind? Enough to put men into the greatest rage and distraction, to think, that they should neglect purchasing the Pearl of Price, when it was offered to their choice by God and Man.

Here particular enquiry will be made, how we have discharged the Duties of our several Relations; it's not the Purple

ple of Princes, nor the Rods and Axes of Magistrates that will make the Almighty afraid of demanding of them, whether they have ruled their Subjects in the fear of God, shewn them a good Example, and punished the obstinate, and encouraged the good, and made it their business to advance Gods glory, and to maintain the true worship of the living God; Nor will Subjects be excused here, neither must they think to come off without making distinct Answers to these Interrogatories; Whether they have obeyed, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience-sake; whether they have behaved themselves peaceably under the Government they have lived under; whether they have paid Tribute to whom Tribute was due, Honour to whom Honour; and whether they have not used their Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness.

In the same manner, Parents will be strictly examined, Whether they have brought up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; Children, Whether they have honoured their

their Parents as became persons, who under God owed their Being to them; Servants, whether they served their Masters according to the Flesh in singleness of Heart, as unto Christ: And likewise all other Persons according to the Relations and Offices they stood in; for in all these Relations, men are Stewards, and both Reason, and Gods Justice, and his Word require, that all should give an Account of their Stewardship.

At this time, the Soul being throughly awaken'd from her former Lethargy, every Sin will appear more dreadful, every Error more red, every Fault more bloody, every Offence blacker than ordinary; for the Fire of that Day doth not only scorch, but enlighten and elevate the Soul into a thinking state, and none of the former Impediments will now be able to divert her Thoughts, which will be fix'd upon an offended God, and his Majesty, Greatness and Holiness, and make at this time more sensible impressions on her, while every thing, especially, what hath been committed

mitted againſt God, will appear in more lively Colours; and conſequently, if the Conſcience hath not the remembrance of a former ſincere Repentance to ſupport her ſelf withal, the frights muſt neceſſarily be great, and the whole Frame ſink into inexpreſſible confuſion.

There are innumerable Sins, which neither Prince, nor Magiſtrate can take notice of: How many Poor are oppreſſed? How many innocent men wrong'd daily? *A Socrates* is abuſed, and hath no helper; but neither this Mans Miſery, nor the others oppreſſion ſhall eſcape the Eyes of that all-ſeeing Judge, who will infallibly publiſh both the one and the other, and make good the Type St. *John* ſpeaks of, *Rev.* 6. 5. *And I beheld a black Horſe, and he that ſate on him had a pair of Ballances in his Hand*: Ballances to weigh every mans evil works, which if they be found to preponderate above the good, or to be pure Sins, pure Offences, without a godly ſorrow to take off either the colour or the weight, all will be turned into blackneſs and deſolation.

3. In

3. In the Prospect of this Judgment, there appears a very wonderful Scene; the same Person that is the Judge, is the Lawgiver too, the Party offended, the witness, and his own Advocate: He that shall sit on the Tribunal in that Day, was the Person that came down from Heaven, and blessed the World with the equitable Precepts of the Gospel; it's he that went up into a Mountain, and from that Pulpit pronounced, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth; Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled,* &c. *Matth.* 5. 1,2,3,4,5,6. It's he that came to undeceive both the Jewish and Heathen World in the false Notions they had imbibed concerning their Duty, and cleared the Moral Law of *Moses*, of the false Glosses the *Pharisees* had put upon it, explain'd the will of God, set it naked and pure before the People, he came to call to Repentance, and let them see what were the proper

Preparatives for the everlasting Joys of Heaven: It's he who guarded the Law which he promulged with Sanctions suitable to his majesty and greatness; and as he made the Rewards eternal, so the Punishments he threatned to the stubborn and impenitent were endless too; So it became him who appeared in the World to offer infinite Mercy to poor Sinners, to reveal to them Gods infinite Love to their Souls, and to acquaint them with the infinite condescention of the Son of God, who would humble himself to the Death of the Cross, to redeem them from the Bondage of the Devil.

He that came into this Valley of tears with so much love and light about him, might justly enjoyn reformation of the whole man, and a transformation of the mind, and temper of the Soul, and require a conformity to his own Life, and insist upon mens becoming patient, and humble, and charitable, and contented, and peaceable, and watchful over their Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, and heavenly-minded: How could

could this Grace, which appeared to all men, challenge leſs than Self-denial, and Contempt of the World, and living in the thoughts and expectation of a better Life, and ſeeking earneſtly for glory, and honour, and immortality?

And as he, that will be the Judge in that Day, is the Lawgiver too, ſo he underſtands beſt the meaning of his Laws; nor will Tricks, and Evaſions, and falſe Conſtructions of thoſe Laws ſignifie any thing before him, who will not depart from the ſenſe his eternal Wiſdom put upon them, and which by his Prophets and Miniſters he once cauſed to be proclaim'd in the Ears of men.

The Sinner in that Day, will not have to do with Deputies, and Lieutenants, and Delegates, who too often make the Law a Noſe of Wax, and can turn and interpret it to what ſenſe they pleaſe, and their Intereſt dictates; are ſometimes unskilful, and apt to miſtake the Law of their Superiors; and theſe Laws not being of their own making, are the colder, or the more remiſs in executing

them; but here men ſhall ſee the Law-giver himſelf, who will not be put off with Pretexts and Pretences, as ordinarily Deputies, and ſuch Perſons are, as are employ'd by the Supreme Law-givers in a Commonwealth or Kingdom.

Even here on Earth, where the Law-givers themſelves ſit Judges, the Male-factor muſt expect ſeverer dealings; in this caſe, even *Lycurgu*'s Wife ſhall not eſcape, that durſt break her Husband's Law againſt riding in a Chariot during the time of Divine Service; and *Zaleucus*, his Son, muſt loſe his Eye, for ſlighting his Father's Order againſt Adulterers; not to mention the Severities of *Manlius Torquatus*, *Epaminondas*, *Tenes*, &c. on their own Children where the Legiſlators have ſat Judges of their Crimes and Errors.

The Almighty Judge in that Day will juſtly reſent the Affront done to his Laws: He hath Reaſon to reſent it; greater Reaſon than any Potentate in the world hath to take it ill that their Laws are ſet light by; Gods Law being holy,

holy, and perfect, and infallible, and under an impossibility of Errour; and a Mercy it is, a wonderful Mercy, that he vouchsafes to give such a Law to the Children of men; and a greater Mercy yet, that his Son came into the world to publish it, and so many thousand Messengers besides are sent to declare it, so that in this affront Mercy and Goodness, as well as Justice, and Sovereignty, and Power, are wronged and abused; and as all Perfections in God are infinite, so whatever injury is offered to any of them, it receives a deeper Dye and greater aggravations from the Infinity of those Attributes; God, who is omniscient, sees the virulent nature of this Affront; and indeed none is better able to declare the heinousness of such contempt than he, and this must necessarily encrease the Terror of that Day.

And as he is the Law-giver, against whose Precepts the Sinner hath offended, so he is the Party offended too.

Sinner, This is he, whose Body and Blood thou hast so often receiv'd unworthily in the Sacrament; this is he, to

whoſe Croſs thou haſt been an Enemy ſo many years, on whoſe Merits thou haſt trampled, whom thou haſt ſo often crucified afreſh, whoſe Temple thou haſt defiled, whoſe Houſe thou haſt diſhonoured, whoſe Goſpel thou haſt been aſhamed of, and therefore wonder not, if ſuch thundring Queries come forth from the Throne at laſt ; doſt not thou remember how oft thou haſt broke thro' the Guards and Fences I have ſet betwixt thee and Sin ? How couldſt thou find in thy heart to afflict and grieve me ſo often, who have endured ſuch Agonies already on the Croſs ? Why wouldſt thou forſake me, the Fountain of Living Waters ? How is it that thou waſt not afraid to make thy Belly, thy Gold ; thy Harlot, and ſuch a great Man thy God ? Did ever any Perſon oblige thee more than I ? Didſt thou ever receive ſuch Favours at any mans hand, as thou haſt received at mine ? And why could not I have thy Heart, and thy Will and Affections ? Why muſt a ſottiſh Luſt and Paſſion engroſs thy Deſires, and my Law be caſt behind thee ?

If

If ever Law-giver had reaſon to be offended, this Judge in the laſt Day hath; for his Commandments were not grievous, his Yoke was eaſie, and his Burthen light; all that was required, was Love; and it's hard, if ſo ſmall a Tribute for his ineffable and incomprehenſible Mercies muſt not be paid him. Its true, this Love muſt extend, and branch it ſelf into various Acts of Meekneſs, and Patience, and Humility, *&c.* But ſtill where Love is the Principle, none of all the other things which are required, can ſeem tedious or difficult.

Nor is this all; for the ſame Judge will be Witneſs againſt the Sinner too: Indeed no Creature can be ſo true a Witneſs againſt him, as the Judge himſelf: There are many Sins no Creature ever ſaw, but he, and therefore who ſo fit a witneſs againſt thoſe crimes as he? *I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Sorcerers, and againſt the Adulterers, and againſt the falſe Swearers, and againſt thoſe that oppreſs the Hireling*

in his wages, the Widow, and the Fatherless, and that turn aside the Stranger from his Right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 3. 5. This Judge sees all, nor will the Sinner be able to elude this Testimony of the invisible God. *When thou wast under the Fig-tree, I saw thee*, said Christ to *Nathanael*; his Conscience knew he had been there, and he believed. But this was in love.

In that Day we speak of, such Language as this will be pronounced in wrath and indignation, and therefore will cause other Thoughts in the hearts of the Wretch that shall hear it; *Thou careless Creature, couldst thou imagine that any thing was hid from me? Did not I see thee at such a time, in such a place, in such a Garden, in such a Chamber playing the Rebel, and the Wanton? Did not I see thee treating with mine Enemies? Did not I see thee conspiring against me? Hadst not thou such base thoughts, such wicked intentions, such impure desires in such Company? I opened the Windows of Heaven, and looked upon thee, when thou wast committing Fornication with such*

a Woman: Wilt not thou believe me, who look'd within the Curtains, and saw thy abominations? Couldst thou think I would look on, and not set thy sins in order before thee?

There will be no contradicting of this Testimony; for thy Conscience, O man, will immediately joyn issue with it, and say, as *Nathan* to the guilty King, *Thou art the Man.* For, besides this grand Witness, there will abundance of other Witnesses come in, which will all help to cast thy impenitent Soul; thy Conscience here will have a great share in the Accusation; that Conscience which once thou didst smother, and curb, and put by, when it pull'd thee by the sleeve, and bid thee be wise and serious; that Conscience that once bogled and winced, when thou offeredst violence to it, and said to thee, as the *Baptist* to *Herod*, it is not lawful for thee to espouse this sin; that Conscience, which was aware of this Judgment, and gave thee warning, and could not with all the strongest Arguments it used, prevail with thee to stand in aw of God; this, like one

of

of *Job*'s Messengers, when the House falls, and all these outward things are gone, alone escapes, to tell the Sinner of his Folly.

Conscience, even in this life, doth sometime force the guilty to make confession of their sins: It forced the Multitude that came to St. *John*, Matth. 3. 6. It forced *Judas* to cry, *I have betrayed innocent Blood*, when no Creature prompted him to the Confession. It forced those who had used curious Arts, *Acts* 18. 18, 19. to bring their Schemes and Figures, and Astrological Tables, and burn them before the Apostles of our Lord. How much greater then, may we suppose, will the force of it be in that Day, when terror will surround it, when it will be readier to speak, and to accuse, than God to ask, and when no noise, no tumult, no croud, no business will be able to divert it?

With the Conscience, the Devils themselves will joyn, who are therefore emphatically called *The Accusers of the Brethren*, Rev. 12. 10. These cannot but know our sins, for they were the

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Tempters, and remember how we yielded, and conſented to their ſuggeſtions. Theſe were the conſtant and indefatigable Obſervers of our lives. Theſe watched our going out, and our coming in; theſe were about us when we lay down, when we roſe, when we walked, and when we ſate, and whatever we did; theſe were ſtill at hand to take notice of our doings, our words, and our behaviour; nor is their Memory ſo frail, as to forget it, nor their Malice ſo little, as to let it ſlip without making publication of it. Theſe rejoyce in our ruine, and will be ſure to make the worſt interpretation of our deportment. Theſe are they that preſented us with charming objects, and were reſtleſs till they had made us enamoured with them, firſt drove us into the Snare, and now will be ready to accuſe us for being taken. And therefore the Fathers, in their Diſcourſes concerning this Day, do juſtly bring in the Devil, arguing, and pleading with the Almighty Judge, Behold theſe men; its true, they were thine by Creation, but they became mine

mine by imitation of me; they had thy Image upon their Souls, but ſee, they have defaced that, and choſen mine; thou didſt breath on them by thy holy Spirit, but they were more fond of my ſuggeſtions, than thoſe motions. Thou didſt indeed draw them with Cords of Love, and by temporal and ſpiritual Mercies ſoughteſt to make them in love with thy Will, but they turned a deaf Ear to thy Call and Invitation; I never gave them any, nor promiſed them any thing, yet they ſerved me like Slaves; thou courtedſt them, and didſt oblige them to love thee, yet they had rather be my Favorites than thy Darlings; if thou didſt command them any thing, that was againſt their Luſts, either they did nothing, or would be ſure to provoke thee with their inventions; I did but becken to them, and they flew to my Camp; nay, they were more impudent than I, believed leſs than I, found out ſins I did not dream of, durſt do more than I bid them; I bid them deny a thing, they had done; and they not only denied it, but ſwore to it by all that's

that's good and holy; I bid them take their eaſe and be merry, and they made themſelves Swine; I bid them neglect God's Service on the Lord's Day, but they prophan'd it beſides, by playing, and drinking, and other Enormities; I bid them keep what they had got, but they went beyond what I prompted them too, oppreſſed, cheated, diſſembled, and made way to their Wealth through oppreſſion of the Widow and Fatherleſs. Theſe therefore have my Image and Superſcription, and conſequently muſt be mine. I claim them as mine own; I challenge them as they are Apoſtates and Traytors to thee: It is thy Statute, which like the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, is irrevocable, that thoſe ſhall be deſpiſed, who did lightly eſteem thee. Nor can God be worſe than his Word, but muſt deliver up the Sinner, whom no Mercy could reform, to theſe Tormenters.

Nay, if we have opreſſed any Perſons, thoſe very Perſons will be Witneſſes againſt us. *Abel* will in that Day bear witneſs againſt *Cain* his Murderer; *Naboth*

both againſt *Ahab*, whole Countries a
gainſt their Tyrannical Princes; *Iſrael*
againſt *Pharaoh*; in the ſame manner,
thoſe whom we have corrupted with
Gifts or Moneys, or ſome other way,
will ſtand up againſt us; *Herodias* a-
gainſt *Herod*; *Druſilla* againſt *Felix*;
the Harlot againſt her *Inamorato*; *He-
lena* againſt *Paris*; *Danae* againſt *Jupi-
ter*; and Men and Women perverted
by Hereticks, againſt the Broachers of
falſe Doctrines; And how can there be
want of Witneſſes, when our School-
maſters, our Parents, and other good
Men, whoſe Counſels we rejected, whoſe
Admonitions we deſpiſed, and whoſe
frequent Exhortations we laughed at,
will be forced to ſpeak what they know
againſt us. Sinner, the Miniſters of the
Goſpel, thoſe who followed thee with
Checks and Intreaties to be reconciled
to God, will be obliged to ſpeak of thy
Stubbornneſs and Impenitence: Nay,
this Pulpit, theſe Walls, theſe Stones,
theſe Pews will cry out againſt
Iſa. 1. 3. thee! Heaven and Earth are
even in this Life called in as

Wit-

Witneſſes againſt the Monſters, who were more inconſiderate than the Ox or Aſs; much more in that Day, when God will bring every thing into Judgment, not only the ſinful Actions, but the very Places in which thoſe Actions were committed.

Such Witneſſes will be the Riches and Goods thou haſt abuſed; the Gold thou haſt ſpent upon thy Luxury, the Silver thou haſt thrown away in a Frolick, the Garments thou haſt abuſed to Pride, the Corn and Bread thou haſt play'd withal, the Hungry whom thou haſt not fed, the Thirſty, to whom thou haſt not given drink, the Naked, whom thou haſt not cloathed, when it lay in thy power; the Priſoners, whom thou haſt not viſited; theſe will all be Accuſers of thy Abuſes and Uncharitableneſs. But the Accuſation of all theſe might yet be born with; it's the Teſtimony of the Judge, who ſhall approve of all that theſe Witneſſes aver; which appears moſt dreadful and terrible, and therefore certainly, the Proſpect of this Judgment is able to damp the greateſt Mirth and Senſuality.

And

And as this Judge will himſelf be Witneſs in that Day, ſo he will be his own Advocate too. To this purpoſe, ſaith the Pathetick *Nazianzen*; What ſhall we do, my Friends, what ſhall we ſay, what Apology ſhall we make, when this Judge ſhall plead for himſelf in that Day? Thou diſobedient Wretch, I made thee of Clay with mine own hands, and breathed the Breath of Life into thee; I made thee after my Image, I gave thee Reaſon, and Underſtanding, and Power and Dominion over the Beaſts of the Field; a Mercy, which if I had not vouchſafed unto thee, thoſe Creatures, which are ſtronger than thou, would have maſter'd and deſtroy'd thee; I placed thee among the Pleaſures of *Paradiſe*, made thee a happy Inhabitant of *Eden*, and when thou wouldeſt needs hearken to the falſe and treacherous Suggeſtions of thy ſworn Enemy, behold, in pity and commiſeration to thee, I reſolved to be born of a Virgin, and accordingly took Fleſh, and became Man for thy ſake, was born in a Stable, lay unregarded in a Manger, ſwadled

ſwadled in Rags and Clouts, endured all the Reproaches and Injuries that Childhood is ſubject to, bore thy griefs, and aſſumed thy infirmities, and was made like thy ſelf, that thou mighteſt be like me in Felicity at the end of thy Race. I ſuffered men to trample on me, to buffet me, to ſpit in my Face, to give me Gall and Vinegar to drink, to ſcourge me, to crown me with Thorns, to wound, and nail me to the Croſs, and all this, that I might deliver thee from Eternal Contempt and Torments. Behold the Mark of the Nails which were ſtruck into my Fleſh. Behold my wounded ſide; I ſuffered, that thou mighteſt triumph; I died, that thou mighteſt live; was buried, that thou mighteſt riſe; and made my ſelf a ſcorn, of the People, that thou mighteſt reign in Heaven; and why wouldeſt thou throw away this Mercy? Why wouldeſt thou refuſe this Treaſure? What evil Spirit did poſſeſs thee to make light of theſe kindneſſes? Why wouldeſt thou pollute that Soul which I redeemed with mine own Blood?

Why wouldeſt thou make thy Heart a habitation of Devils, which I intended for my Throne? Why wouldeſt thou loſe that which I purchaſed at ſo dear a rate? What pleaſure couldeſt thou take in doing that which coſt me ſo many Sighs and Tears, and a bloody Sweat? Why wouldeſt thou make a mock of ſo great a Mercy? How couldeſt thou undervalue a Favour of that importance and conſequence? Can any Hell be thought too much for ſuch Stubbornneſs? Either thou didſt believe, that thy God did all this for thee, or thou didſt not: If thou didſt not believe it, why didſt thou make confeſſion of it with thy Mouth? If thou didſt, how couldeſt thou be ſo ungrateful? How couldeſt thou abuſe a Friendſhip of that worth and value? Thou loveſt a Friend, a Neighbour, a Man, a Woman, for Kindneſſes, which are meer Shadows, and Bubbles to my Love, and hadſt not thou reaſon to love me beyond all earthly Comforts? Hadſt not thou reaſon to prefer my Favour before the Smiles of a tranſitory World? How did I deſerve ſuch

ſuch prepoſterous uſages at thy hands? Couldeſt thou have dealt worſe with a Slave, or with an Enemy, than thou haſt done with me? Did this condeſcenſion deſerve, doſt thou think, ſuch Affronts and Injuries, ſuch Contempt and Diſobedience, as thou haſt returned to me? Therefore, as for thoſe mine Enemies, which would not have this Man to reign over them, bring them hither, and ſlay them before me.

All this appears in the Proſpect of a future Judgment, and therefore there muſt be Vertue in it, to check that Mirth and Jollity, which infatuates Souls, and leads them into ruine.

4. In the Proſpect of this future Judgment, there appears the unſpeakable anguiſh and miſery of thoſe who have been moſt jolly and merry in this Life. *Dives*, who cloath'd himſelf in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day, appears there quaking, and trembling, and crying, *Father* Abraham, *Have mercy on me, and ſend* Lazarus, *that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my Tongue*;

his Tables, which were overlaid with Silver, his richer Beds, his Tapestry, his Ornaments, his Ointments, his Balsams, his Cordials, his delicate Wines, his various Dishes, his Cooks, his Flatterers, his Parasites, his Retinue, his Servants, and all the Noise and Pomp that attended him, are not only extinct, and turned into Ashes, and Dust, and Dirt, but his naked Soul is dragg'd and carried before a tremendous Majesty, to endure intolerable torments; and before this terrible God he appears with his Eyes cast down, blushing and ashamed, trembling and fearful, and all his former Comforts seem to have been but dreams to him.

See how the Scene is changed; he to whom the poor man formerly supplicated for relief, now is forced to supplicate to thepoor Man to be relieved of him, & would be glad of *Lazarus*'s Table, who once scorned to let *Lazarus* gather the Crumbs that fell from his; when *Lazarus* was near him, he slighted him; now he is afar off, he adores him, and himself now is the poor man, while *Lazarus*

zarus ſwims in Riches; ſuch a diſcovery doth that laſt Day make, who are the Rich, and who are the Poor, who the Wiſe, and who the Fools.

In this Judgment *Nimrod, Senacharib, Nebuchadnezzar, Belſhazzar, Tiberius, Nero, Domitian,* men who would be thought Gods, and denied themſelves in no pleaſure their Fancies craved, ſtand all aſhamed and confounded, flames of a guilty Conſcience burning in their Breaſts, and forcing their voices into bitter lamentations; there *Sardanapalus, Cræſus, Cambyſes, Herod,* and all the Mighty men, that ſpared no Woman in their Luſt, and no Man in their Anger, appear all like guilty Malefactors, their Hearts failing them for fear, and they chattering like a Crane, and mourning like a Dove, and bewailing their aiery, ſhort and tranſitory ſatisfactions, and curſing the Hour and the Minute when the firſt Temptations courted them to thoſe dangerous Embraces; there *Cleopatra,* that ſailed in a Veſſel gliſtering with Gold, a Veſſel fitted for Pride, and Luxury, and Mag-

nificence, and tried how far Senſuality might be improved, and to what height bruti∫h Plea∫ure might be advanced; there the wretched Woman is ſeen, not ſo much with Serpents cla∫ping about her Breaſt, as with a Worm within, that dies not, tormenting her awakened Conſcience with ſhapes of Death, and Images of Ruine, and all the Beaſts, that here could not be ſatisfied with Plea∫ure, there cannot be eaſed of gnawing Vultures and Agonies; for theſe the juſt God muſt at laſt inflict, to make them ſenſible that his Threatnings were no Fables, and to let them ſee, that the Advices of wiſe Men and Philoſophers, who exhorted them to the ſtudy of Virtue, were grounded on rational Foundations.

Theſe Tortures and Vexations muſt not expire till the Ancient of Days, who was affronted by their ſins, doth die, and that's never, he being the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever: Thus their ſweet Meat muſt have ſour Sauce, and if they will have their Plea∫ures, they muſt feel the Sting too, that's inſeparably

ſeparably affix'd to them. The Bait cannot be ſwallowed without the Hook, and as pleaſant as the Honey is, the Gall which is part of it, muſt be taſted too. God will not be always mocked, and they that durſt in deſpight of his Will and Prohibitions, feed upon that luſcious Fruit, ſhall feel the ſmart of the Prickles too.

In this Judgment their Poſtures, Geſtures, and Behaviour and Deportment appear in another Figure, and they that before laught at the Thunders of the Law, made light of the Threatnings of the Goſpel, and let the Warnings of the Miniſters of the Goſpel go in at one Ear, and out at another, now call themſelves Fools and Sots for doing ſo; and they that before thought of no after-reckoning, now fall a wiſhing, but in vain; O that I had been wiſe! O that I had bethought my ſelf! O that I had looked beyond this World! O that I had believed! O that I had retired, and conſidered what theſe Satisfactions would end in! Fool that I was, to think that God would prove a Liar!

Where was my Reaſon, to think, that all that the wiſeſt and holieſt Men have ſaid, were but Dreams and idle Tales! I that might have been a terror to Devils, how am I become their Scorn! I, that might have been a Favourite of God, how am I become his Enemy! I, that might have triumphed with other Saints, how am I fallen from their Bliſs! O what would not I give to be rid of the torment I feel! Help, help, ye Souls that have any pity in you: I ſink under the weight of my former pleaſures; they are loathſom to me; they appear Monſters, Furies, hideous things to me! Curſed be that Luſt I cheriſhed! Curſed be that Bed on which my wickedneſs was wrought! O that my Tongue had dropt out of my Head when I pleaſed my ſelf with laſcivious diſcourſes! O that I had been deaf when I was tickled with hearing a ſmutty jeſt! O that I had been ſtruck blind, when with joy and ſatisfaction I beheld that charming Beauty! O that my Feet had failed me when I was going into that jovial Company! O that

I had

I had locked my self up, that I might not have seen those Temptations which enticed me! O that I had spent those Hours I threw away in Carding and Dicing, and Drinking and Revelling! O that I had spent them in holy Contemplations of the Vanity of these sublunary Objects! Now I would do it, and it is too late; now I would repent, and it profits me not; now I would be serious, and it signifies nothing; my Time is lost; the Day of Grace is gone; the Opportunities are past: O that I could tear out this Heart! O that I could pull out these Eyes! O that I could dispatch my self! O that I had a Sword, that I might put a period to this miserable condition! I see nothing but Ruine before me, nothing but Darkness, nothing but Confusion, nothing but Horrors, and no Creature will help me to annihilate my self; I am not able to endure this Torture for a moment, how shall I be able to endure it to infinite Millions of Ages? I see no end of it; the farther I look, the more of my Misery I see: Where-ever I cast

I caſt my Eyes, I ſee nothing but Terror, Devils, and miſerable Souls in the ſame condition with my ſelf, all howling about my Ears: A thing ſo far from affording Comfort, that it fills me with greater Horror. Whither ſhall I flee for remedy? Heaven is ſhut up; there is a vaſt Gulph betwixt me and that; there is no paſſing from hence thither, nor from thence to this doleful place: I ſwim in a Sea of Sorrow, I ſwim, and ſee no ſhoare; I labour, and not a Plank appears, on which I may ſave my Life; here are no Hills, no Mountains, no Rocks I can cry to; and if there were, they are all deaf; God hath forſaken me, and good reaſon; for I left him for a Luſt, and undervalued him for Trifles: I pleaded, I could not withſtand the Charms the World offered to me: Mad man! I could withſtand them now, why could not I have withſtood them then? I might have conſidered of this Place, and of this State, and of theſe Vexations, and checked my ſelf: O that I were but to live again in the World! O that God would but try

me

me again! How would I ſcorn the very thoughts of Mirth and Raillery! How would I run away from the very mention of theſe Impoſtures! Break my Heart, break! If God will not kill thee, call upon the infernal Spirits, and ſee what they will do: But Oh, they delight in theſe groans! Themſelves lie under the ſame Condemnation, baniſh'd from the gracious Preſence of God; They would die as well as I, if they were able: O what a Torment is it! I ſee the everlaſting Joys before me, and cannot reach them; they are over my Head, and I cannot come near them; Paradiſe I ſee, but cannot enter into it: I knock my Head, I ſmite my Breaſt, I ſtamp with my Feet, but am never the better. That *Jeſus*, on whoſe Blood I trampled, I ſee rejoycing with his Followers at the Right Hand of God, and not a drop of Comfort drops from his Lips, on mine! I feel Flames within, which no Waters can quench; a drop of Water would be ſome refreſhment, and give me ſome hopes of eaſe; but here is none: All the Rivers of Con-

Conſolation are dried up to me; I walk in Darkneſs, I ſee no Light: O God, tear the Heavens, and come down! Canſt thou hear theſe ſhrieks, and be unconcerned? Canſt thou ſee this poor Creature lie in torments, and give no relief? Haſt thou no Mercy left? O then my State is deſperate! I ſhall not be able to refrain from Blaſphemy; for I ſee none can help but thou, and thou wilt not; I rave, I am diſtracted with fear; I tremble, I quake; Stand off Devils! I have Furies enough within: Ye damned Pleaſures, whither have you brought me? Ye have made me loſe the Favour of him who alone is able to give me eaſe! I might have been happy, if it had not been for you; I might have eſcaped theſe Regions of Anguiſh, if you had not tempted me: But why do I accuſe you? This brutiſh Heart of mine was in the fault; my Deviliſh Luſt hurried me into Ruine; I had Reaſon, and would not uſe it; Means of Grace, and would not apply them; Offers of Mercy, and would not accept of them, *O all ye that paſs by, behold and*

ſee,

ſee, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger; from above he hath ſent a Fire into my Bones, and it prevails againſt them; he hath ſpread a Net for my feet, he hath turned me back, he hath made me deſolate, and faint all the day; the Yoak of my Tranſgreſſions is bound by his hand, they are wreathed, and come up upon my Neck, he hath made my ſtrength to fall, the Lord hath deliver'd me into their hands from whom I am not able to riſe up. Lam. 1. 12, 13, 14.

All this certainly appears in the Proſpect of that future Judgment, and conſequently is enough to check and damp the greateſt Jollities on this ſide Hell; and though it's true, that it doth not cauſe the leaſt diſturbance in thouſands of Men, that drink of theſe ſtollen waters; for men in this Age are as jovial as ever, and a Judgment to come frights them no more than an Houſe on fire a Thouſand Miles off; but ſure this is for want of taking the proper way and me-

thod,

thod, which God and Reason doth prescribe; and what that way and method is, shall be shewn in the following Paragraph.

3. How the Prospect of that future Judgment must be managed, that it may actually damp and put a stop to these carnal Delights.

This is to be done no other way, but,

1. By thinking, reflecting and ruminating upon that future Judgment. This stands to Reason; for except things be made visible to us, how shall they move or fright us? This future Judgment being out of sight, and afar off, it must be brought near, and set before us; and there is no way to do it but by thinking. Our Thoughts are the Picture-drawers, which make the Land-skip of that Judgment so lively, that our Faculties cannot but be signally affected with it. These are the Divine Part within us, which can make things past and future, as present, and summon the remotest Objects to become familiar and palpable. These

are

are the Glaſſes in which all that God hath ſaid, or promiſed, or threatned, becomes viſible, and with the help of theſe we may make that Subſtance, which ſeemed but Air before, and condenſe that into ſolid Notions, which to a carnal Man ſeemed but Fancy and Wind before. Theſe can make us in a manner graſp and feel that which was out of our reach before, and make us concern'd about things which we neither ſee, nor hear, nor feel with our groſſer Organs. Theſe can tranſplant the other World into this, and make Eternity appear before us, though we live in Tabernacles of Clay: To prove this, we need only appeal to Experience. Behold thoſe pious Souls, that take a courſe contrary to that of the World; What makes them afraid of ſinning? What makes them afraid of running with their Neighbors into Riot? What makes them that they dare not do what ſome of their Carnal Acquaintance and Relations do? What makes them mourn? What makes them rejoyce in Spirit? You ſee nothing that they

have reaſon to mourn for: They have a competency, they want nothing in the World, they have Neceſſaries and Conveniencies, and they proſper in their lawful Undertakings; and under ſome of their greateſt Afflictions, you ſee nothing that ſhould make them chearful, no outward cauſe of their Joy, but rather all that is about them is an invitation to ſorrow and dejection: Why? They are inviſible things, that make them mourn and rejoyce, and by thinking of them, they make them viſible, and ſo viſible, that they are affected with them as much as other men are with Objects that incur into their Senſes; by thinking they ſee the Terrors of the Lord, and the Affronts they have offered to the Divine Majeſty, and the Wounds they have given to their own Souls, and that makes them weep; by thinking they ſee the Glory that is ſet before them, and the recompence which is promiſed them, and the Right and Title they have to it, and that makes their Soul rejoyce: So then, by thinking this future Judgment may be ſeen

and

and if it be ſeen in any lively colours, there is no Sinner ſo ſtout, no Man ſo perverſe, no Creature ſo dull and ſtupid, but it will ſtartle him, and put *Wormwood* into his *Cup*. *When I eat, or drink, or whatever I do, the laſt Trump ſounds in mine Ears, and I think I hear the terrible Voice of the Arch-Angel, Ariſe ye dead, and come to Judgment*, ſaith St. *Hierom*: Theſe Thoughts made him eat and drink with great moderation: Theſe brought a holy Fear upon him in all his Actions: Theſe kept him from going beyond the Bounds God had ſet him: Theſe ſtruck Seriouſneſs into him in all places: Theſe made him as circumſpect in the Market-place, as if he had been at Church, and as devout in the Street, as if he had ſtood at the High Altar. And therefore I do not wonder at that *Hermit*, that he became ſo ſerious a Man as Antiquity reports him, who carried a little Book about him, conſiſting only of four Leaves, in which he was always ſeen reading, and after reading, meditating; in the firſt Leaf was expreſſed *Chriſt*'s Paſſion, and

what that Darling of Mankind ſuffered for poor Mortals, during his abode in the World; in the ſecond, was repreſented the Proceſs of the future Judgment, with the Terrors and Conſternations that guilty men will be in at that time; in the third, were deſcribed the Glories of Paradiſe, and of that third Heaven which all holy Souls ſhall enter into, there to poſſeſs the Inheritance of the Saints in light; in the fourth, was drawn to the life the Picture of Hell, and of the Miſeries which ſhall await the ſtubborn and impenitent in the next life; Theſe four Leaves were ſoon read over, but they afforded infinite Matter for Thoughts and Meditations; and by theſe his Soul was ſo warmed, that he cared not what became of him here, ſo he might but enjoy the promiſed Glory, and that Life and Immortality Chriſt had brought to light by the Goſpel.

So true is that Saying of St. *Chryſoſtom*; There is no Man that thinks much of Hell, that will ever fall into it; as indeed there

Chryſoſt. Hom 2. in 2 *Theſſalon.*

there is no Man who makes light of it, that will ever escape it. For as it is among men, they that are afraid of the Penalties of the Law, seldom or never feel them; for their Fear makes them shun those Actions which deserve them: This keeps them from Theft and Rapine, from Murder and Adultery, from Burglary and Wrong, from Violence and Oppression, and consequently from the punishments the Law inflicts in such Cases. The Plagues and the Stripes they fear, make them cautious, and whatever their inclination may be, the Rods and Axes they fear, restrain them; whereas those that are regardless of the Mulct, bring it upon themselves; so it is here, the frequent thinking of it, is the best Antidote against the Terrors of that future Judgment: If the *Ninivites* had not feared their overthrow, they had certainly been overthrown; and how could they have feared it, if they had not thought of it? If the men that lived before the Flood, had thought of it, and been afraid, they would not have been drowned; nor

would the People of *Sodom* have been consumed by Fire, if they had taken this course: It's a great Misfortune not to think of the fulfilling of Gods Threatnings; for he that thinks not of it, of all men, will be the first that shall have woful experience of it.

It is reported of *Agatho*, That in his last Sickness, falling into a Trance for three days together, he lay with his Eyes fixed upon Heaven, and all that time look'd very ghastly; recovering out of the Extasie, and being asked by his Friends, where he had been, and what his Thoughts had been during those three days, and what made him look so strangely? O my Friends, said he, 'Do you ask me where I have been? Alas! I have been these three days standing before the great Tribunal, and seen how the most just Judge sentenced divers Souls to Eternal Darkness; and who would not stand amazed at the dreadful Spectacle?

It was therefore a very good Prayer of St. *Ambrose*: *I do most vehemently desire, O Lord, that thou wouldest be pleased*

ed to imprint, and very deeply imprint the Land skip of the future World, the Miseries of the Disobedient, the Groans of the Stubborn, the Agonies of the Impenitent, the Shrieks of the Prophane, the Vexations of Hypocrites, the Fears of the Careless, the Destruction of the Covetous, the Perdition of Worldlings, the Flames of the Revengeful, the Terror of Damnation, and Eternal Torments, and the future Felicity of thy Kingdom, upon my Mind; for it is impossible that he that thinks much of these things, should not become thy Child and Servant, and one of those whom thou hast predestinated to Eternal Life.

Dost thou laugh, said the Old Man in *Ruffinus*, to a Youngster (whose Behaviour was very light) when you and I are to be judged before Heaven and Earth? And indeed that Person that surveys what the Divine Jesus hath said of this future Judgment, thinks how in that Day the Powers of Heaven will be shaken, the Sun turned into Darkness, the Moon into Blood, and the Stars forbear to give their Light, how the World, and all the Elements will

be on Fire, the Univerſe melt like Wax, the Earth be burnt up, the Seas dried, and the Rivers conſumed, and with what Glory and Bravery the once afflicted Son of God will then appear, with an Army of Angels about him, diſplaying their Banners, and carrying the Sign of the Son of Man before him; how before him all Nations will be aſſembled, and all that are in their graves, upon hearing the Voice of God, loud as Thunder, and more dreadful too, will be ſummoned to appear before his Bar, the Judge ſhining in his Meridian-glory, brighter than *Moſes*, clearer than the Sun, and how the Conſciences of guilty men will quake at this ſight, their Hearts miſgiving them, that their Portion will be in outward Darkneſs, how formidable all the Tranſactions will be, how immutable the Sentence, after it is once paſſed, not to be altered, or depreciated by Saints or Angels, how all Evaſions & Subterfuges will be out of doors there, and all poſſibility of transferring our Errors upon others who have been Partners with us in our Sins, will vaniſh,

niſh, how thoſe that make themſelves Fools for Chriſt's ſake in this Life, were reproached, reviled, derided, and laughed at for their Severities, would not loſe their Souls for a Trifle, nor ſell their Birthright to Eternal Bliſs for a Morſel of Meat, would hold faſt their integrity, though ſolicited by innumerable Loſſes and Croſſes, and by their neareſt Relations to curſe God and die; how theſe who were here made the off-ſcourings of all things, will then be abſolved and quitted, and have Seats appointed them in the Manſions of Glory, there to reign, and ſing the Goodneſs of God to all Eternity. I ſay, he that ſeriouſly ſurveys theſe things, if he be a Perſon who hath not debauch'd or loſt his Reaſon, cannot but be affected by paſſages of this Nature, and think it time to curb himſelf in his ſenſual Delights and Satisfactions. But,

2. Bare thinking is not enough, but the Particulars of this future Judgment muſt be actually applied to our ſelves; General things, and what is done to others, though they may touch the

Heart, yet do not ſubdue it till particular applications give them force and power. A Fire, that is a Mile off from me, though it cauſes in me ſome ſenſe of the Calamity ; yet if it threatens the Houſe I live in, my Faculties ſoon beſtir themſelves, and I fall to work, and ſecure my ſelf in good earneſt ; ſo here, when I behold the tremendous Proceſs of this Judgment, I muſt reflect, that as God deals with others, ſo he will certainly deal with me ; that I have no greater privilege than others, but muſt ſtand and fall by the ſame Law that they ſtand and fall by ; that to fancy any more favourable proceedings towards me, than God intends to others, is but a Dream, and contrary to the impartiality of the Judge ; that as I have a Soul to be ſaved as well as my Neighbour; ſo God will expect I ſhould live here, as he bids my Neighbour live, that neither my Eſtate, nor Dignity, neither my Offices, nor Friends, neither my Riches, nor my Greatneſs, will excuſe my living more careleſly than my poorer Friends; nay,

that

that my outward Advantages make my Account greater; and as I have had greater Talents beſtowed upon me, ſo more will be required of me than of them who have not had thoſe opportunities of being good and holy, which I have had; that as God hath advanced me in the World, placed me in a higher ſtation, given me a conſiderable figure here on Earth, made his Candle to ſhine upon me, cauſed my Root to ſpread by the Waters, and the Dew of Heaven to lie all night upon my Branch, and afforded me Credit and Reſpect among men, ſo he looks for greater Fruitfulneſs in good Works, and more than ordinary exemplarineſs to advance his Glory, and to ſpread the Power of Religion among my Inferiors and Dependants; and therefore upon a view of this future Proceſs, I muſt needs rouze my Soul by ſuch Queſtions as theſe;

If God be reſolved to judge the Secrets of mens hearts according to his Goſpel, what will become of me? Should God call thee to Judgment, O my Soul,

Soul, this Night, or this Hour, art thou in a condition to appear before so great, so dreadful a God? Is this Foolery thou pleasest thy self with, this wanton Dress, this jolly Life, these merry Hours, this Gaming, this Carousing, this extravagant Laughter, this Fondness of the Humor of the Age, this immodest and frothy Talk, this fooliſh Garb, this phantastick Fashion, this misspending thy Time, this keeping of vain Company, this unprofitable way of Living, this thy being intent altogether upon the Profits and Pleasures of the World, this Indifferency in Religion, these faint Resistances of Temptations, this Neglect of known Duties, this unfaithful Discharge of the Duties of thy Relations, this unwillingness to mind any thing that's serious, this Aversion from Spiritual Discourses and Actions, this want of Gravity, *&c.* Are these fit Wedding-Garments to come before the King of Heaven in? Thou maist be summon'd to come to his Bar within this day or two; think what an infinite Majesty thou must be presented to: Should God speak the word

word within a few Minutes, *Come away, come away, and give an Account of thy Behaviour*; how unprepared art thou? So great is thy danger, and canſt thou loiter? So near art thou to a tremendous Eternity, and Oh wilt not thou be clean? Thou ſtandeſt upon the brink of Hell, and wilt not thou ſtep back? Thou art within a Bows-ſhot of the great Tribunal, and doth not thy countenance change? Thou art within hearing of the Thunders, that come forth from the Throne of God, and do not thy thoughts trouble thee? Thou ſeeſt the fatal Hand upon the Wall, and do not thy Knees ſmite one againſt another? Thou muſt ſhortly appear before all the Hoſt of Heaven, and art not thou got farther yet in Holineſs? Doſt not thou quake to think, that the Revenger of Blood is upon thy Heels?

As thou art a Chriſtian, thou art a Son of God, and doſt thou expreſs that filial diſpoſition in thy Gate, and Looks, and Face, and Life? Art thou born of God, and canſt thou degenerate from his Nature? Art thou made after his Image,

Image, and by Grace renew'd after his Similitude, and canſt thou be contented under a temper ſo different from that Holineſs, which is thy great Father's Perfection and Glory? Does God expect thee at his Tribunal with the Qualifications of a Child, and wilt thou appear before him as a Rebel? Hath he given his Son on purpoſe to adopt thee, and thinkeſt thou to preſent thy ſelf before him in the ſhape of a Prodigal? Thou art deſigned for a Citizen of the Celeſtial *Jeruſalem*, and wilt thou appear before him as an Inhabitant of Hell? Thou art one of God's Family, and wilt thou appear before him as a Traytor? Thou art purchaſed by his Blood, and wilt thou live as if that Blood had been ſpilt in vain? Thou art waſh'd in the Laver of Regeneration, and canſt thou wallow with the Swine in the Mire? Thou haſt known the Way of Righteouſneſs, and wilt thou with the Dog return to the Vomit?

Or art thou not afraid of
Rev. 22. 15. that Saying, that Dogs muſt ſtand without?

Thou

Thou art called to be faithful, and haſt given thy Faith to God; Wilt thou break thy Faith, and hope to be guiltleſs at this Bar? Will not God revenge this Breach, or canſt thou think he will let thee go unpuniſh'd for thy Treacheries? How canſt thou expect the performance of his Promiſes, while thou art ſo falſe to thy Engagements? Thou haſt vow'd thy ſelf to him both in Baptiſm and the Supper of the Lord, and canſt thou imagine, that thy Perjuries will not be remembred when thou comeſt to look the Judge in the Face? By giving thee opportunity of becoming a Chriſtian, God hath made thee a King, and wilt thou run to the Bramble, and ſay, Come thou and reign over me? As a King, thou haſt power given thee to vanquiſh Fleſh and Blood, to tread upon Lions and Adders, to defie Principalities and Powers, and to cruſh Devils, and wilt thou make thy ſelf a ſlave to thoſe Enemies, over which God hath given thee power to trample them under thy Feet? As a King thou art to appear before him, and wilt thou come

in

in the posture of a miserable Vassal? Shall those Passions rule over thee which thy God hath given thee for Servants and Handmaids? And what a dismal sight will it be, when thou art to come before the Throne laden with conquests, to appear fettered with Chains and the Devils Trophies? God designs thee to be his Priest; This is one of the Priviledges that came by the Blood of Christ. But where are thy Sacrifices? The Sacrifice of fervent Prayer, the Sacrifice of an humble and contrite heart, the Sacrifice of Praise, and Delight in God? And wilt thou come without the Mark of thy Office before the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls? Thou art enlightned by the Spirit of God, and dost thou think to live in Darkness, and after all to share in the boundless Inheritance with the Children of Light? How unlike thy self wilt thou appear before God, if thou come without these Qualifications? Thou art a Christian but where is the Life of Christ that should be in thee? Will the Judge ever take thee for his Sheep, when it is evident

evident, thou doſt not hear his Voice? How ridiculous is that Man that hangs out a Buſh, and yet hath no Wine to ſell? And how fooliſh is that Apothecary that writes glorious Names upon his Pots, when the rich Drugs that are named, have no being in his Shop? And will it not tend to thy everlaſting confuſion that thou haſt had the Name of a Chriſtian, and done nothing like a Chriſtian?

Thus the particular Proceedings of that future Judgment muſt be applied to our ſelves, if we reſolve that the Proſpect of a future Judgment ſhall damp our carnal Delights and Satisfactions, and without uſing this Method, we do but trifle, and talk of breeding Mountains, and bring forth ridiculous Mice; play with Religion, and are not in good earneſt, when we ſay, we believe a future Account.

3. But neither the Reflections aforeſaid, nor the Application we have ſpoken of, will make any deep impreſſion, except all be ſeconded with earneſt Prayer, that God by his holy Spirit working

working in our Minds, would make the Attempt effectual; this muſt ſet to the Seal, drive in the Nail, and clench it. The Eternal Spirit muſt give Succeſs to theſe Enterprizes, and in vain do we plant or water, except he gives the increaſe. He is that anointing, which muſt ſupple the Soul, and crown all with Laurels and Victory. By ſtrength of Thought, and Application, the Fort of Sin may be aſſaulted; but without this Spirit lends his helping hand, it will never be taken or ſubdued. His Power muſt overcome the Oppoſitions our Fleſh and the World will certainly make in this caſe, and if he blows upon our Hearts, the ſtrong Holds of Iniquity, like the Walls of *Jericho*, will fall, and nothing can ſtand before him, and he will certainly come in to our aſſiſtance, if our Prayer and Addreſſes be fervent and importunate. Upon ſuch Devotions, the frequent Diſcourſes of this Day of Judgment, we read or hear, will be ſo far from bringing the thing into contempt with our Souls, that our Hearts will be awakened more, and it's

impoſſible,

impoſſible, we can miſcarry in the pious Deſign, if with ſtrong cries we apply our ſelves to him, who hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead, *Acts* 17. 31.

That which we are chiefly to inſiſt upon in theſe Addreſſes, is, that we may get lively Apprehenſions of that Day, and ſuch Apprehenſions, as no Pleaſure, no Folly, no Temptation of the World may darken or deſtroy; And here let the Soul break forth into ſuch Ejaculations:

'O God, great and glorious, make 'me deeply ſenſible of that Day, and of 'that Hour, when the Son of Man will 'come, when the Goats ſhall be ſepara-'ted from the Sheep, the Tares from the 'Wheat, the Good from the Bad; when 'neither Prayers nor Tears ſhall be able 'to deliver the guilty and polluted Soul 'from the impendent danger; when it 'ſhall be ſaid to the humble, *Friend, ſit*

'*up higher*; and to the proud Fool, *Give* '*place to him that is more honourable than* '*thou art*; when the Book of Conſci-'ence ſhall be opened, and the Dead 'judged by the Contents of that Book; 'when the Sinner will not know where 'to flee, and his Spirits will fail him, 'for fear of him that ſitteth upon the 'Throne.

'O God! Fix theſe Conſiderations in 'my Soul; ſtrengthen my Faith, that 'I may believe theſe things unſeen, with-'out wavering. How apt is the World 'to get between this tremendous Day, 'and my ſight? Quicken thou mine 'Eyes, that I may ſee through all im-'pediments into that Proceſs, and re-'flect, what manner of Perſon I ought 'to be in all holy converſation and god-'lineſs. Lord Jeſu! great Judge of 'the World! let the Lines of that Judg-'ment be written ſo legibly in my mind, 'that my Soul may delight to read them, 'that nothing may divert me from ſtu-'dying and conſidering them; let this 'be my chief ſtudy, and let me feel the 'ſame effect, that thoſe men did, who

'were

'were converted at thy Apoſtles Ser-
'mon; let me be prickt at the Heart,
'and cry out, *What muſt I do to be ſa-*
'ved? Let the thoughts of this Day
'make a Reformation in my outward
'and inward Man, that it may appear,
'that thou haſt touch'd me with a Coal
'from the Altar. O God, to whom
'Vengeance belongs, ſhew thy ſelf, and
'diſperſe my fooliſh Deſires. Let my
'Soul feel the Tranſactions of that Day
'as well as believe them. Clear my
'Underſtanding, and enlighten my
'Mind, that I may have a livelier Pro-
'ſpect of it. I will not let thee go ex-
'cept thou bleſs me: Look down from
'the Habitation of thy Holineſs, and
'viſit my Soul. Expel the Prejudices I
'have againſt Severity of Life, and with
'the Thoughts of this Day deſtroy them
'utterly. Let the conſideration of this
'Day ſo work upon me, that my Am-
'bition, Covetouſneſs, Pride, and An-
'ger may tremble at this ſight, and leave
'their habitation, and may be ever a-
'fraid of returning. Oh tell me, that
'this Day will certainly come, and that

'the Day of my Death will be the Em-
'blem of it. Oh assure me of the Ter-
'ror of that Day, that shall burn like
'an Oven, wherein all that do wicked-
'ly shall be Stubble, and the Fire shall
'burn them up, that it shall leave them
'neither Root nor Branch; let me not
'take example by the careless World,
'that put this evil Day far from them.
'Let it be always before me: Let my
'Mind be never free from the Contem-
'plations of it. Let it mingle with my
'Business, with my Meals, with my
'Converse, with my Sleep, and with
'all my Undertakings. In every Sin I
'am tempted to, let it frighten me in
'my going out and in my coming in, let
'it continually beat upon my Mind. Oh
'my Lord! let me muse upon this Day
'of Retribution, this Day of Recom-
'pence, this Day of Trouble, this Day
'of Terror, this Day of Joy, this Day
'of Comfort, this Day wherein thy
'Promises and Threatnings will be ful-
'filled, this Day which must decide the
'controversie of my Life and Death,
'this Day which will bring to light all

'hidden

'hidden things, this Day which will 'revive the good, and confound the bad; 'this Day of Conſolation, this Day of 'Conſternation, let me ruminate upon 'it, till thoughts of this Judgment pre-'vail with me to become a new Crea-'ture; thy Grace muſt melt my ſtub-'born Heart; without thee I can do 'nothing. O relieve me! O come in 'with the Light of thy Countenance! 'Stir up my Soul, and rouze it from 'its careleſneſs! Call to me as thou 'didſt to thy People of old: let that 'voice ſound in my ears,

Zeph. 1. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. '*The great Day of the 'Lord is near, it is near, 'and haſteth greatly, even the Voyce of 'the Day of the Lord; the mighty Man 'ſhall cry bitterly; that Day is a Day of 'Wrath, a Day of Trouble and Diſtreſs, 'a Day of Waſtneſs and Deſolation, a 'Day of Darkneſs and Gloomineſs, a Day 'of Clouds, and thick Darkneſs, a Day of 'the Trumpet, and Alarm againſt the 'fenced Cities, and againſt the high Tow-'ers, and I will bring Diſtreſs upon men, 'that they ſhall walk like blind Men, be-

'*cauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord*,
'*and their Blood ſhall be poured out as*
'*Duſt, and their Fleſh as the Dung*; *nei-*
'*ther their Silver nor their Gold ſhall be*
'*able to deliver them in the Day of the*
'*Lord's Wrath.*

'O let me not loſe the ſenſe of this
'Day! Oh let me conſider, how much
'better it is to be humble and contemp-
'tible, and to hunger and thirſt, and to
'ſuffer here, and afterwards to enter in-
'to my great Maſters Joy, than to be a
'Slave to my Luſts and Pleaſures here,
'and to be bound at laſt with everlaſting
'Chains of Darkneſs, Chains which
'never wear out, Chains which always
'bind, are always grievous, always
'painful: Oh let me conſider, how
'much better it is to mourn here, and
'to water my Couch with my Tears,
'and to afflict my Soul, and after this,
'to triumph with the Spirits of Men
'made perfect, than to feed upon Plea-
'ſures, which at the beſt, are but like
'the crackling of Thorns under a Pot,
'and then to be ſent away to howl with
'Devils: Help Lord, help, that my

'Soul

'Soul may be concern'd at her danger, 'and deſpiſe the World, and prepare 'againſt that Day, and encounter with 'Powers, and Principalities, and Spiri-'tual Wickedneſſes in high Places; if 'by any means I might attain unto the 'Reſurrection of the Dead.

Such Prayers offered from a Heart, that hath no Reſerves; from a Heart, reſolved to do any thing rather than miſs of Salvation; ſuch Prayers, I ſay, if they expreſs the very deſires of our Souls, will certainly put Death and Paleneſs into our ſenſual Pleaſures, and oblige us to entertain other Thoughts of the gauds and gaieties of the world, than now we have, and make us ſenſible, that this caſting ſuch a damp on the fooliſh ſatisfactions of the fleſh with the Proſpect of that Day, is not only a Task fit for Hermits, and Melancholick Scholars, and contemplative Men, but a Duty incumbent on all that carry immortal Souls in their Breaſts, which calls me to the Fourth Point.

4. Whether every Man is bound to embitter his carnal Delights with this Proſpect?

To this I must answer in the Affirmative: For though the young Man be particularly mentioned here, yet since the expression in the Text reaches all men who are fit for action, all such must necessarily fall under the obligation of this Duty, and all that are capable of such Delights, are bound to make use of the aforesaid consideration, in order to this self-denial; if the young Man is obliged to this seriousness, much more older Men; if God will not allow of these Delights in Youth, they must necessarily be intolerable in Years of greater Maturity; and if the tender Age be concerned to embitter them with this Prospect, when it meets with any temptation to them; without all Peradventure the stronger cannot be excused. And the Reasons are these following:

1. If they be not embitter'd with such Thoughts as these, they will infallibly lead the Soul into innumerable dangers; and there is no man but is obliged to preserve his Soul from danger. It is said of the Prodigal, *Luke* 15. 13. That *he took his Journey into a far Countrey*; these sensual

ſenſual Pleaſures alienated his Soul from God, drove it away from him, made him travel as far as Hell; the Truth is, the Soul is loſt in ſuch ſenſual Pleaſures, they wear out the bright Notions the Soul had of God and Religion; as it is ſaid of the *Sicilian* Dogs, that running through the ſweet and flowery Fields, they loſe their Sent in hunting; ſo the Soul, where theſe Pleaſures, theſe white Devils become her Familiars, loſes the noble Apprehenſions it once had of Gods Omniſcience and Omnipreſence, of his Holineſs and Goodneſs, and of the truth of his Promiſes and Threatnings; and theſe Characters, like Letters written with bad Ink, vaniſh, and conſequently the Life of the Soul; for which reaſon the Prodigal, who drowned himſelf in theſe delights, is ſaid to be dead, *v.* 32. Theſe choak the good Seed that's ſown in the noble ground; and as you have ſeen a Field of Wheat, where the red Poppies ſpring up as faſt as the richer grain, though the proud Flowers are pleaſing to the Eye, yet they retard and hinder the growth of the more uſe-

ful

ful Blade, and ſuck away the Moiſture that ſhould have fed the other; ſo ſenſual Delights, where they are taken in as Partners, and ſuffered to grow in the Soul, in which ſome Fruits of the Spirit do appear, in a ſhort time blaſt thoſe excellent Fruits, the Effects of the Holy Ghoſt, or Education, or the Miniſtry of the Word, and prove Bryars and Thorns, which will not ſuffer any of the better Corn to grow under them.

Mans Soul and Body are like two Buckets, while the one comes up full, the other goes down empty: Carnal Delights advance the brutiſh or fleſhly part, make it grow ſtrong, luſty and vigorous, whereby it wreſts the Scepter out of the hand of Reaſon, and the Soul loſes her Strength, and Power, and Sagacity in Spiritual things, grows weak and faint, and at laſt expires and dies; I mean the vertuous Principles, which either kind Nature, or kinder Grace, or Afflictions, or ſome other Means and Inſtruments have incorporated with the Soul, which indeed are the Life of that excellent Creature; and the Soul being thus

thus dead, it falls a Prey to Devils, who rejoyce over ſo great a Prey, and lead it in Triumph, take it Priſoner, and make it draw in their Victorious Chariot; and now all the Curſes of the Law are in force againſt it, the Threatnings of the Goſpel become her portion, and there is nothing left to ſtand betwixt her and eternal grief and anguiſh, but the ſlender Thred of this Mortal Life; which, if it chance to break or tear, the Soul ſinks irrecoverably into the Gulph of Perdition, from whence there is no returning; ſo fatal is the influence of theſe flattering gueſts, which in time ſtarve their Keeper, and finding the Houſe empty, ſwept and garniſhed, like the Evil Spirit ſpoken of, *Matth.* 12. 45. go and take with them ſeven other Spirits more wicked than themſelves, and they enter in, and dwell there, and the laſt ſtate of that Man is worſe than the firſt; and thus they plunder, and boldly rob the Soul of her Riches, and hinder her from that Holineſs which is her Food, her Cordial, and her greateſt Support, and without which no Man

can

can see the Lord; they had need therefore be embittered with something that's sour and unpleasant to Flesh and Blood. He can smite the Stream, and turn those sweeter Waters into Blood, which nothing will do more effectually than the aforesaid Prospect.

2. This embittering of sensual and carnal Delights is a thing of the greatest concernment, and therefore must be necessary, and all must be concerned in the vertuous Enterprize; the greatest Blessings (the want of which make a Man perfectly miserable) depend upon it, even God's Love of Complacency, and the Application of Christ's Merits, and the Benefits of his Death and Passion; these belong not to the Soul, that is enamoured with sensual delights, no more than they appertain to Dogs or Swine; nay, they are useless and insignificant to such a Soul, as much as the Mathematicks are to an Ass or Ideot. There is a perfect Antipathy betwixt these and the Comforts we speak of; for they are intended only for humble, broken, contrite hearts, which temper a

Per-

Perſon that's fond of ſenſual delights; is not capable of, nor can ſuch a Man reliſh them, they are as Hay, and Straw, and Stubble to him, and like a Perſon, whoſe Appetite hath been ſpoiled by a raging Fever, he looks upon them as unſavoury and inſipid food, and though he may talk of them, yet it is only as blind men do of Colours. As it is in Nature, the Meat we eat muſt be agreeable to our Stomachs, ſo it is in Grace. There muſt be a holy Principle within, that makes theſe Spiritual Comforts agreeable to it; but ſenſual Delights deſtroy that Principle, and as Darkneſs drives out Light, ſo theſe two are incompatible; and indeed our Bleſſed Saviour is very peremptory in his Aſſertion, That he who doth not deny himſelf, cannot be his Diſciple, *Matth.* 16. 24. And what Self-denial can there be, where we do not deny our ſelves in that which is moſt pernicious to our better part? For ſo are theſe ſenſual Delights: Not to be Chriſt's Diſciple, is to have no part in him: Not to have any part in him, is to be none of his Sheep;

Sheep; and not to be of his Sheep, i
to be placed with the Goats at the le
hand in the last Day; and what th
consequence of that is, you may read
Matth. 25. 41.

It's true, maugre all that we can sa
to the contrary, men who are resolve
to indulge themselves in their brutis
Delights, will, notwithstanding the co
tradiction they must needs be guilty o
believe that they are Christ's Disciples
and Favourites of Heaven, and tha
Christ hath purchased Eternal Life fo
them, and that at last they shall enjo
it; but alas! they know not what E
ternal Life, nor what Believing means;
as well may a man in *Bedlam* fancy him
self to be a King, as such Persons, tha
they are the Beloved of God, while
they live in that which is most contrary
to his Nature, and like Enemies to the
Cross of Christ, like Persons that have
nothing but Body, nothing but Flesh,
nothing but Sense about them. If men
may be saved contrary to Christs Word,
contrary to his Declaration, contrary to
all the most solemn Protestations he hath
made

made in the Gospel, then such men may be saved, not else; who can reflect upon these doings without indignation, or grief, or sorrow, or wishing for rivers of tears? That men should pretend to own the Gospel, and yet live directly contrary to the Laws of it, argues either Malice, or Distraction, or stupid Ignorance; yet with such men for the most part we have to deal; which makes S. *Paul*'s Exhortation highly reasonable, *Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not Faith,* 2 Thes. 3. 1, 2.

3. This embittering our carnal and sensual Delights, is that which men for certain shall wish they had done, when they come to stand before the great Tribunal. In that Day mens Eyes will be opened, and things will appear to them in other Colours than now they do. Their Understandings will not be clogg'd with this World, or Divertisements. They will have other Apprehensions of the Nature of Vertue and Ho-

Holineſs, and the Truth of what Chriſt hath delivered in the Goſpel: The Reaſonableneſs of his Precepts, the Equity of his Commands, the Excellency of his Doctrine, the Divinity of his Miracles, the infallible Certainty of his Promiſes and Threatnings will all ſhine bright in their Eyes; of all theſe they will be throughly convinced, and no doubt, no ſcruple, no ambiguity will remain as to any of theſe Points; the vileneſs of their Pleaſures, the brutiſhneſs of their Satisfactions, the raſhneſs of their Delights, the baſeneſs of their Enjoyments, the brightneſs of thoſe Vertues they have deſpiſed, the glory of that Grace which they might have had, and would not, and the trivialneſs of the things they preferr'd before theſe, will then appear ſo plain, ſo legible, that there will be no room left for Ignorance.

It's true, theſe things might be known here, and would men take the right way, they might come to be convinced and perſwaded of them on this ſide Eternity; for ſome we find are fully ſa-

tisfied

ſatisfied as to theſe Particulars, and walk ſutably to them, and therefore it cannot be impoſſible for others to attain to it; but their inſenſibleneſs is rather an Argument of ſtupid negligence, and wilful lazineſs; and ſo it muſt be, where People are not, or pretend not to be ſatisfied in things of this Nature. It is therefore neceſſary there ſhould a time come, when they ſhall be able to make no excuſe, nor to evade the force of theſe Truths, and when they ſhall behold how wiſe a choice the ſelf-denying Soul hath made, and what her mortifications, and ſeverities do end in, what applauſes they receive in Heaven, what kind looks from the Everlaſting Father, what Honour, what Dignity, what preferment is deſigned and appointed for her, how ſuch a Soul Triumphs at this time over Hell, and Devils, dares all the Furies of the Burning-lake, ſcorns thoſe foes which led the ſenſual ſinner captive, makes her Neſt among the Stars of Heaven, is placed in the Quire of Angels, meets with all the Careſſes of a gracious God, is encirled with Laurels,

and Crowns of Joy, and all her Misery, and Sorrows, and Fears are at an end. Reason tells us that the sensual Sinner, when he shall behold all this, will wish, he had follow'd her example, for that's the necessary and eternal consequence of all imprudent Actions, especially those that are grosly so; for afterward men do as naturally wish, that they had acted the part of wise men, as *Balaam*, that he might die the Death of the Righteous. Thus men become wise after the Fact, and when they find what fools they have been, would be content that they had foreseen the evil, and hid themselves: Who would not wish in that day he had embittered his sensual delights, that finds he is undone by eating of those luscious Apples? And I need not tell you, that it is every Man's Interest not to do that which he will wish he had not done, when it is too late. But of this I have said enough before. The next Point follows, and is a Case of Conscience, how far sensual Delights must be embittered with this Prospect.

Prov. 5. 11, 12.

5. Whe-

5. Whether a Christian that would be saved, is upon this account obliged to forbear and abandon all sensual and worldly delights and recreations whatsoever?

So not a few have thought in the Primitive times which made them retire from the World, and deny themselves in all the Comforts of this Life, and put themselves to very great hardships and self-denials, being of opinion, that they who laughed here, would mourn hereafter, and such as enjoyed the good things of this Life, would be miserably poor hereafter. They looked upon the two Worlds as opposites, and consequently believed, that the Means to arrive to the happiness of the future, were directly contrary to all present satisfactions; they concluded, that they who would be happy hereafter, must be unhappy here; and that they who would be happy here, could not be so hereafter; from hence rose their selling all they had, and giving it to the poor, and the strange severities they used upon their Bodies, whereof I have dis-

courſed elſewhere; and indeed the Goſpel gives very little encouragement to any thing that favours of worldly pleaſure, nor do the Apoſtles allow much liberty in this particular: whether it were that they thought that all ſenſual delights were improper for a ſtate of perſecution, in which the Church then lived, or whether it was, that they were afraid ſuch delights would damp their ſpiritual Fervour; this is certain, that there is little to be gathered from their Writings in favour of Sports and Recreations.

Happy Aſcetic, p. 425. *& Seq.*

Yet as ſtrict as the Goſpel is, it grants that we have Bodies as well as Souls, and that if the Bow be not unbent ſometimes, the String will crack and become uſeleſs; and though its poſſible for our Minds to ſoar ſo far above the World, as to know and care for no other delights but what favour of God and the glories of another Life; yet thoſe ſpiritual delights will not be of any long continuance, without the Body be allowed ſutable refreſhment, and hath its intervals

intervals of ease and relaxation. Were not some Divertisements lawful, Christ would scarce have vouchsafed his Presence at the Wedding-Feast in *Cana*, much less provided them Wine to encourage temperate chearfulness; and hither may be referred St. *John* the Evangelist's playing sometimes with a Bird, and going into a common Bath, whereof Ecclesiastical Histories give us an Account; yet since there is nothing more common with men, than to confound their sinful Delights with lawful Recreations, it will be necessary here, to explain the Point in these following Particulars:

1. This must be laid down as a grand Principle of our Religion, That a Spiritual delight in God, in a Crucified Saviour, and in the Blessed Effects and Influences of the Holy Ghost, in the Graces and Fruits of the Spirit, in feeling the Operations of the Divine Power and Glory upon our Souls, in the precious Promises of of the Gospel, in the Revelations, God hath vouchsafed to Mankind, in the *Phil.* 4. 4.

Good we see wrought in our selves and others, in the Providences of God, and in Contemplation of his various dealings with the several States, Orders and Degrees of Men, in Psalms, and Hymns and Praises of the Divine Majesty, in the thoughts and expectations of a better Life, in the Treasures God hath laid up for them that fear him, in another World, and in the various Priviledges, Prerogatives and Advantages of Holy Men, *&c.* It is certain, I say, that delighting and rejoycing in such Spiritual Objects, is the chief, the principal and sovereign delight which a Christian is with greatest application of Mind to labour after, and in comparison of this, is obliged to count all these outward Comforts Dross, and Dung, and Dogs meat ; this is the delight which must engross his Desires, Affections and Inclinations ; this must rule in his Soul, this must be Mistress and Queen Regent in his Mind ; to this all must stoop, and then things cannot but go well, if this be secured and established. Without worldly Pleasure, Thousands of Saints

have

have arrived to everlasting Bliss, but without this none; Sensual Delights are no part of a Christians Comfort; but this Spiritual Delight is the one thing necessary; and till a prospect of a future Judgment causes this Delight to rise in our Souls, whatever sudden impression it may make sometime, the Plant is not of our Heavenly Fathers planting. Such must be the temper of our Souls; in the aforesaid Objects our Souls must delight more than in all Riches; and this delight being once setled in us, such worldly delights as are subservient to this, and do neither diminish, nor darken, nor hinder, nor quench it, may justly be said to be lawful.

2. This being premised, we do not deny but such worldly delights, as are neither sinful in themselves, nor apparent Occasions of Evil, are allowable. And of this nature are all those Masculine Exercises, whereby the Body is preserved in health, and rendred more capable of serving the Soul in her Religious Severities; as Walking, or Riding abroad to take the Air, Planting, Gar-

dening, Raising curious Plants and Flowers, Running, Wrestling, Fowling, Hawking, Hunting, Fishing, Leaping, Vaulting, Casting of the Bar, Tossing the Pike, Riding the great Horse, Running at the Ring, and such Divertisements which stir the Blood, make us active and vigorous, fit us for greater and more useful Enterprizes, and promote Chearfulness and Livelines; such cannot be supposed to be forbid by the Gospel, provided that they be used, 1. *Seasonably*; not on those days and hours which are appointed, either for Devotion, or more weighty Business; and therefore these cannot be proper
7 Exercises of the Lords Day, or Days of Fasting and Abstinence, or Days of Mourning. 2. *With Moderation*; so that much time be not spent upon them, and our love to them may keep within its due bounds and limits. 3. *For a good End*; which must be to render ourselves fitter for the discharge of our Duty to God and Man. 4. *With purpose of Self denial*; so that we can leave or quit them for a greater Good; when either

ther a work of Piety, or an act of Charity is to be performed, or Scandal to be prevented; where these Limitations are not observed, the Honey turns into Gall, and that which deserv'd only our Civility and transient Respect, becomes our Idol, and our Souls receive considerable hurt, which, had these Divertisements been used with circumspection, might have been beholding to them in some measure for their welfare and edification.

3. From this Rule we may rationally infer, that delight in Orchards, Gardens, Rivers, Ponds, either Natural or Artificial, and in the Comforts of Wife, Children, Friends, in our Trades, and Relations, Houses, Buildings and Possessions, the bountiful hand of Heaven hath bestowed upon us, is consistent with a serious prospect of a future Judgment; not but that excesses may be committed in this delight, as the best and most harmless things may be abused; yet where we delight in them, as they are the Gifts of God, more than as they are Satisfactions to the Flesh, and build

not

not upon them, rest not in them, but still look upon them as things volatile and transitory, and are ready to part with them, whenever Providence shall think fit to remove them, without grumbling or murmuring, and do let the World see, that in these delights we forget not the Rules of Gravity, Modesty, Decency and Charity, they may lawfully be called inoffensive, and as a Snake whose Teeth are pulled out, handled without danger: And though *Solomon* calls these Delights Vanity, yet that which made them so, was the immoderateness of his love toward them, and his setting his heart, and doating upon them, and placing felicity in them, making them his mark, which should have been only a passage to nobler enjoyments, and fixing there, where he should have lodged only as in an Inn, and so marched on to the City, which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Delight in things of this nature, may soon run beyond its bounds, if either too much cost be spent upon

Eccles. 2. 4, 8, 10, 11.

upon them, whereby the poor are robbed of their due, or Men forget to employ their Thoughts upon sublimer Objects.

4. The same may be said of delight in *Musick*, whether Vocal or Instrumental; a delight harmless enough, if used as Salt, not as Meat; as Sauce, not as Food; as a Bit on the By, not as a standing Diet; and though the Men the Prophet speaks of, *Isa.* 5. 12. are severely checked for the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe in their Feasts, yet it was because they made their Musick an *Appendix* to their Drunkenness, and as it is said in the same Verse, *regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands. David's* playing upon the Harp was no sin, while it was not to encourage wantonness, but with an intent either to praise God, or to divert *Saul's* Melancholy; nor can I discommend the *Pythagoreans*, who, before they went to sleep, composed their Minds with Musick. We read in *Gellius*, *Ælian*, and others, how men have been cured not only of irregular Passions,

Passions, but of very strange Distempers of the Body by Musick; and what is signally conducing to the Good and Benefit of Mankind, we must suppose is allowed by that God, who himself consults the health and welfare of his Creatures; and this made *Jubal*'s Profession lawful, who was the Inventer of Musical Instruments, and therefore called the Father of all such as handle the Harp and Organ. The end for which such Delights are used, makes them either tolerable, or impertinent; and as he that designs them to refresh either his own, or other mens weary Spirits, and to glorifie God by them, deserves commendation, so he that makes them instrumental to feed mens Lusts, or to promote Lasciviousness and Lightness in Conversation, renders himself unworthy of the Name of a Christian; and therefore those Fidlers and Musicians, who shew themselves at merry Meetings, or promiscuous Dancings, which serve only to pamper the Flesh, and to encourage Extravagance and Luxury, will be able to

Gen. 4. 21.

give

give but a very ſad Account of their Profeſſion; and if ever they come to take a ſerious view of their paſt Lives, will have reaſon to wiſh that they had ſpent that time in mourning for their ſins: Chriſtianity, which allows us moderate Recreation, bids us abhor all Delights which ſerve to render the mind vain and fooliſh, and alienate the Soul from her true centre, or tempt us to miſpend the precious hours, the Almighty hath lent us to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling.

5. Delight in Books, and natural Sciences, ſuch as Aſtronomy, Phyſick, Philoſophy, Mathematicks, Hiſtories of all ſorts, and in ſearching into the Nature of Plants, Stones, Minerals, Fruits, Juices, Herbs, Gums, Birds, Fiſhes, Beaſts, *&c.* as it is a thing uſeful, ſo it cannot be contrary to the Rules of Chriſtianity; and though Aſtrology, as it is abuſed into telling of Fortunes, and good or ill Succeſs in Buſineſſes, diſcovering of Theſts and ſtoln Goods, and knowing future Events, is no proper Object of this Delight, partly, becauſe

becauſe the Rules are uncertain and imaginary; partly, becauſe it tempts People to unlawful Curioſities; partly, becauſe the Scripture forbids theſe Fears and Hopes, which are grounded upon the Aſpect of the Signs of Heaven, and looks upon them as Miſtruſts of the Divine Providence; yet that's no Argument but that a Man may lawfully with ſome delight enquire into the Nature, and Influences of the Stars, to ſee, whether what the World hath talked of them, is grounded upon any Scientifick Principles. I need not ſay here, that delight in *Magick*, or the *Black-Art*, as they call it, is as great abomination in the ſight of God, as the Sin it ſelf; nor can I give any favourable Judgment of delight in Palmeſtry, becauſe that Art ſeems to interfere with that ſelf-reſignation and dependance upon the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, which is required of us; and even delight in lawful Arts, Books and Sciences, muſt have its Rules, whereby it muſt ſteer its courſe; for the Affections may ſtick too cloſe to delights of this Nature, and

the delight juſtle out our warmer deſires after that knowledge, wherein conſiſts Eternal Life. An inordinate delight in Knowledge, was the cauſe of our firſt Apoſtaſie; and it is too often ſeen that our Ambition to know, ſlackens our endeavours after a practical love of God; and while we doat upon ſpeculation, we forget to do that which would make us like our Father which is in heaven.

6. Delight in *Drinking and Tipling*, muſt needs be as odious to God, as delight in Wantonneſs, or Uncleanneſs, or Laſciviouſneſs, or Lechery, or impure Kiſſes, Touches, Glances, Paſſions, Deſires, Thoughts, Geſtures, Poſtures and Imaginations, or Feeding our Eyes with obſcene Sights, and Spectacles, or filthy, ſmutty, and lewd Communications, Diſcourſes, Jeſts and Expreſſions, *&c.* For this is to delight in things God hath forbidden, and to take pleaſure in that, to which he hath threatned the burning Lake, and the Worm that dies not; and though Cuſtom hath made delight in drinking faſhionable,

and

and he that doth ſo, is not at all reproached, or thought the worſe man for it; yet who knows not, that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor will the Almighty make the Cuſtoms of this world his Rule in paſſing Sentence in the laſt Day. Not but that a Man may delight in a Cup of Drink, as it is the gift of God, when he is dry, and Nature requires it, and Neceſſity calls for it; but there is a vaſt difference betwixt ſatisfying the meer Neceſſities of Nature, and gratifying the Deſires of Voluptuouſneſs and Idleneſs; to delight in the former, is to preſerve, but to delight in the other, is to weaken and deſtroy Nature; and where men are at a Loſs how to ſpend their time, and therefore make Drinking their delight and ſport, they act like *Solomon*'s Mad-man, who caſt Fire-brands, Arrows and Death, and ſaid, *Am I not in ſport?* Prov. 26. 18, 19. Nor is it the example of Gentlemen, and Perſons of Wealth and Quality, that will juſtifie this dangerous Delight at the great Tribunal; ſince believing the Word of God is a greater

duty

duty, than to regard our Neighbours practices; and did the whole World espouse a Vice, this would not absolve a Man from his obligation to obey that known Law, *Exod.* 23. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do evil.* The Pretence Men have in this case that they have no Calling or Imployment, or have nothing to do, and therefore must some way or other divert themselves, is as vain and sinful, as their delight; and the time will come when they will be convinced, that they were under no impossibility to employ themselves in useful exercises, there being innumerable opportunities of doing good, of exhorting, teaching, admonishing, helping, assisting and encouraging our Neighbours, and improving our own Minds, and far better ways of spending our Time, than in drinking, pledging of Healths, talking idly, censuring our Neighbours, pleasing our Appetite, keeping ill Company, and throwing that away upon our Lusts which might with greater satisfaction have been given to Christ's distressed Members.

7. Delight in *Cards* and *Dice*, is a Sport, which very few Divines and wise Men do approve of; and those that have allow'd of it, have given such Restrictions and Limitations, as makes it evident, that they wish it were rather totally left, than practised with so much danger as this delight is commonly attended with. The Council of *Eliberis* would not admit any person to the holy Communion, that plaid at Tables; and if the Offender did repent of his Sport, it was a whole year after his Repentance, before they would admit him to the Holy Table; and to this purpose speaks the Sixth Council General of *Constantinople*. The Truth is, this delight is a manifest occasion of evil; and where there is one that comes off without sinning, there are forty that involve themselves in various Transgressions. What wise Man would stand upon a Precipice, when he can walk in a beaten Road? And where Men love to go to the utmost limit of what

Conc. Eliber. c. 79.

Conc. Const. 6. c. 50.

what is lawful, they commonly fall, and engage themſelves to commit Errors they did not think of; the Holy Ghoſt therefore hath not thought fit to reveal to us theſe utmoſt bounds, that we might keep within the compaſs of known duties, and by a due diſtance from what is ſinful, preſerve our Innocence, and Gods Favour. We blame Children for medling with Knives and Swords they know not how to uſe; and why ſhould we be guilty of a Folly and Imprudence we condemn in them? He that abſtains from Cards and Dice, moſt certainly doth not ſin, and who would not take the ſureſt ſide of the Hedge?

Thoſe Caſuiſts who do allow of this Recreation, make it lawful only with theſe Proviſoes: 1. Provided, that Men play without eagerneſs, or being much concern'd. 2. That they give no occaſion to men to quarrel. 3. That they give all the Money they win to the Poor, or ſome Pious Uſe, elſe it is a ſign they do not play for Recreation, but for Gain. 4. That they ſpend but very

little time in it, not above an hour or two. 5. That they avoid all light, vain, and fooliſh Words, Jeſts and Expreſſions. 6. That the End they propoſe to themſelves, be only to exhilarate their Spirits; that they may with greater chearfulneſs apply themſelves to more uſeful Labours. 7. That they play without uſing any fraud or deceit, 8. That they give no offence to them who are weak in Faith. 9. That they do not comply with the ſinful Actions, Speeches and Behaviour of thoſe they play with.

And with theſe Reſtrictions, I queſtion not, but this Recreation may be lawful; and the ſame may be ſaid of Bowling, and ſome other divertiſements of this Nature. What ſome Divines object here, That playing at Cards and Dice, is a thing of the Nature of Lots, and theſe being things ſacred, ought not to be made Jocular, hath not that ſubſtance in it, which at firſt it ſeems to have; for though theſe Games and the Events of them, be things caſual, yet

yet every thing that's casual, is not of the Nature of a Lot, else a mans putting his hand in his Pocket, and taking out what Money comes next to his hand, and dropping it among People that stand underneath, whereby one gets a Shilling, another Sixpence, a third a Groat, must be called a Lot too: But However, Let's grant, that these Games are of the nature of Lots, how doth it follow from hence, that all Lots are things sacred, because sometimes there is a sacred use made of them, must therefore the use of them be sacred at all times? There is a sacred use made of Dreams, of Bread and Wine, of Clay and Spittle, *&c.* But must these things therefore be sacred at all times, and in all places? As well might a man infer, that all Worship is religious, because some is such; if it be said, that in Lots there is either a tacit or express imploring of a divine determination; I answer, that in some Lots there hath been such a thing practised; but that therefore the same must be practised in all Lots whatsoever, is absurd to imagine.

The Apoſtles indeed, *Acts* 1. 24. when they caſt Lots, add a Prayer to it; but the additional Prayer is not therefore neceſſary in all Lots, becauſe ſome perſons upon ſpecial occaſions have made uſe of it. A Lot, or caſting of Lots, is properly an action of meer Contingency, uſed to determine a Queſtion by the event, which action, if it be uſed in things ſacred, and of great conſequence, may juſtly be ſeconded with formal Prayer and imploration of the Divine Direction; but if uſed in things civil, ordinary and trivial, there is no need of any ſuch ſacred Rite or Ceremony: That God hath a hand in all Lots, is no argument, that no Lot may therefore be jocular; for God hath a hand in our Laughter, and in other contingent things which are jocular, yet doth it not follow from thence, that they are therefore abſolutely unlawful, but only as circumſtances, and the abuſe of them may make them ſo. However, my intent is not to turn Advocate for Gameſters, who abuſe theſe Recreations, as much as the Drunkard doth his Wine and ſtrong

ſtrong Liquor. I have therefore limited the Sport, which limitations ſhew how dangerous the Recreation is, and how he that plays at theſe Games walks in a manner upon Thorns, and had therefore need walk very cautiouſly, that ſome miſchief doth not befal him.

If the aforeſaid Reſtrictions be obſerved, it is a ſign we make ſome conſcience of our ways, and with *David*, ſet the Lord in all places before our eyes. I am ſenſible, Men will plead impoſſibility of keeping to theſe bounds, and pretend that this way they ſhall have no ſport; but if it be ſo, and they cannot play without greater liberty or licentiouſneſs, it is not only far better, but neceſſary totally to abſtain from it. He that knows ſuch a Diet will not agree with him, by a natural inſtinct forbears, and refuſes to meddle with it; and if we know that by ſuch recreations our Souls cannot live according to the ſtrict Rules of Conſcience, what can be more reaſonable than to ſhun and avoid them? Wiſdom is as neceſſary in ſpiritual things as in temporal,

and he that doth not practise it in the concerns of his Soul, as well as in those of his Body, cannot be supposed to be a man of any ardent Devotion.

8. Delight in *Feasting*, or *in going to Feasts*, though this seems to be harmless, and some will wonder, why this should be brought upon the Stage, and the lawfulness of it questioned; yet there are Rocks even in this Delight, which if the Soul doth not shun, it may be in danger of Ship-wrack; and though its true, that Eating, and Drinking, and Sleeping, and using Physick, where the Body is in danger, are necessary Delights, and such, without which Nature cannot be kept in its due order and health, and aptitude for working; yet Intemperance may be committed in all these, and consequently, these Delights deserve to be taken notice of, and fenced with sutable Cautions, that we do not exceed our measure.

And as nothing is more certain, than that the Voluptuousness of *Cleopatra*, *Heliogabulus*, *Apicius*, and other Gluttons, is a most detestable Vice, so it may justly be

be demanded, whether Feasting, which borders upon that Voluptuousness, especially if a man take delight and pleasure in it, may not deserve very great circumspection? *Plato* looked upon *Dionysius* as a Monster, because he did eat twice a day; yet cannot this be a rule, whereby we may give judgment of this Delight, since the Constitutions, Climates, Countreys, and the Complexions and Necessities of Men require various applications of Food and Nourishment.

That Feasts are things lawful in themselves, no man of Sense or Reason can deny; for not only the Examples of holy Men in Scripture, but Gods Command, or Permission to the Jews, *Deut.* 4. 6. are a sufficient demonstration; and the Love-Feasts the Primitive Christians used, St. *Jude* approves of, *v.* 12. Not to mention that they are Bonds of Union, and Preservatives of Friendship and Respect, and that the universal Consent of Nations doth warrant them.

These

These Feasts, as they are usual either at Inaugurations, or at Nuptials, or upon some other solemn Occasions, or among Friends and Relations, so the Delight a Christian takes either in making them, or in going to them, must be regulated by these following Observations.

As to the Party that makes them; 1. That he do not confine his Invitation to the Rich and Wealthy, and who are able to Feast him again, but extend it withal to the Poor and Naked, to the Blind and to the Lame, according to Christ's Rule, *Luke* 14. 13, 14. 2. That he do not make any Feasts for ostentation sake, but with a pious intent of preserving and augmenting Friendship, Love and Charity; for ambition to be talked of and commended, is against the general Prohibition of desiring vain Glory, *Gal.* 5. 26. 3. That he do not Feast on those Days on which a Nation Fasts, or Humbles it self, to deprecate Gods Wrath and Anger; for this is expressly forbidden, *Amos* 6.4,5,6. 4. That he do not study too great Curiousness,

neſs, or Delicacy in his Diſhes, nor beſtow too much Coſt upon the Entertainment; for this looks like expecting of Applauſes, and catching the Praiſes and Admirations of Men, which is below a Philoſopher, and therefore much more a Chriſtian. 5. That he leave every Gueſt to his Choice and Liberty, and preſs no Perſon to eat or drink more than ſatisfies Nature, in which particular, *Ahaſhuerus* his Practice is to be commended, *Eſt.* 1. 5. 6. That he ſuggeſt unto his Gueſts Opportunities to diſcourſe of Subjects grave and ſerious, either Divinity or Hiſtory, or ſomething uſeful to the Publick, or Philoſophy, whereby his Friends may receive ſome Edification; and this ſeems to be the purport of St. *Paul*'s Admonition, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. 7. That he encourage nothing of Ribald Talk, no promiſcuous Dancing, no Ballads, no vain drinking of Healths, no Apiſh Actions of Fools and Jeſters, and give no occaſion by Word or Deed to Contention or unſeemly Behaviour in any man; for this were to make himſelf acceſſory to other mens ſins; a thing con-

contrary to the Law of Christ, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22.

As to the Party that goes to a Feast, his delight deviates from the Rule of the Gospel; if, 1. He goes to it with no higher intent than to please, and to fill his Belly with the good Chear he hopes to find there. These are base ends, differ not from those of Brutes, and discover a temper that hath not yet tasted of the Powers of the World to come. It is true, whoever goes to a Feast, goes with an intent to eat there; but to a Christian Philosopher this is only a subordinate end; in this he places no felicity, with this he doth not greatly please himself, but a desire to express his respect and affection to his Friend, hopes of hearing or doing some good at such times, and a design by his own Temperance and Sobriety, to teach or invite others to their Duty; these are the principal ends which make him go: and this is most agreeable, not only to the Rules of his Faith, but to Reason too. 2. His delight grows irregular and sinful, if he sits very long at it; for here-

by

by much time is loſt, and God expreſly condemns it, *Eſ.* 5. 11. Time, as it is one of the richeſt Talents God vouchſafes us, ſo care muſt be taken, that much of it be not ſpent upon carnal Satisfactions, which are things too mean to throw away ſo great a Treaſure upon; and though that time at Feaſts and Entertainments is well ſpent, which is ſpent in ſerious and profitable Diſcourſes and Conferences, yet ſince theſe are altogether out of faſhion, and People think they are not welcome except they may laugh at every Trifle, and ſpeak whatever comes next; this makes ſpending but little time at ſuch Meetings neceſſary; for the longer this unprofitable ſpending laſts, the greater grows our Account, and with the Account our Inexcuſableneſs. 3. His delight degenerates, if at ſuch times he be not a ſtrict obſerver of the Rules of Temperance. Feaſts, as they require Gueſts, ſo they require Self-denial in the Gueſts too; and though I cannot much commend the Cuſtom of the *Pythagoreans*, who would come to a Feaſt, and

and to let men see their victory over their Appetite, depart from it without eating any thing; yet to eat and drink with great moderation, is at such times the more necessary, by how much the Temptations are greater; and St. *Hierom*'s Rule in this case, is so to eat and drink, as not to indispose our selves after it for Prayer and Meditation.

9. Delight in *Fashionable Cloaths and Habits*; though the great liberty Men and Women take in things of this Nature, hath infected Peoples minds with that stupidity, that few do think it worth questioning whether it be lawful or no; yet notwithstanding all this, he that shall impartially examine the various Invectives the Holy Ghost makes against this Delight, will think himself concern'd to be more inquisitive in this Point; Cloaths as they were given, 1. To cover our Nakedness. 2. To keep out Cold and other Injuries of the Air. 3. To make a difference betwixt Men and Women. 4. To consult the health

Es. 3. 18, 19, 20, 21.
1 *Tim.* 2. 9, 10.
1 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4.

health of our Bodies, which being ſubject to Sweats and Perſpirations, are hereby refreſhed. 5. To diſtinguiſh Men in Places, Offices, Dignities, from the meaner Sort, the Noble from the Ignoble, and conſequently to keep up Order in a Common-wealth or Kingdom; as they were deſigned by the Almighty for ſuch uſes, ſo we ſee that where Perſons ſuffer their Affections to delight in the Fineries, and Faſhions, and Modiſhneſs of them, their Minds are too often drawn away from more excellent Satisfactions, Vanity enters into them, and whatever Formality they may keep up in Matters of Religion, Spiritual things begin to be dull and inſipid to them, at leaſt their reliſh and admiration doth in a great meaſure decay and vaniſh.

I know not how it comes to paſs, but Experience aſſures us, that Simplicity in Cloaths doth very much cheriſh Serioufneſs, as Vanity and Exceſs in ſuch things doth ſtrangely weaken & debilitate its Force and Power; and though Cloaths ſeem to be foreign to Religion, and

and ſmall, inconſiderable Trifles, yet ſ
it is, that the ſmaller and the more tri-
vial ſome things appear, the more in-
ſenſibly they incroach upon the Spiritua
Part, the Soul, and render it earthly an
ſenſual, and therefore deſerve our greate
cautiouſneſs and circum-
De Serm. in Monte lib. 2. ſpection. St *Auſtin* there-
fore is very peremptory: *H*
that is fond, ſaith he, *of ou*
ward Splendor, whether in Cloaths, or othe
things, ſoon betrays himſelf that he is i
love with the Pomp and Glory of the worl
nor can ſuch a perſon deceive any ſerio
man with a ſhew of Holineſs.

As it was part of our Saviour's Pro-
vince to reduce things to the primitive
Inſtitution, ſo, if we reflect, how God
when he cloath'd our firſt Parents, di
not ſtudy Splendor, but Neceſſity; no
Gayety, but Conveniency; and made
them Coats of Skins, and by ſo doing
warned us againſt Pride and Extrava-
gance; we ſhall find but little reaſon t
be fond of over-curious and faſhiona-
ble Habits, eſpecially if we caſt ou
Eyes upon the Original of Cloaths; fo

Sin

Sin caused Shame, and Shame produced Cloathing.

I do not deny, but that it is lawful to make use, not only of a plain and homely Suit, but of richer Vestments and Habiliments; for since God hath allowed us not only Bread and Water for our Sustenance, but variety of Food, if used with Moderation and Thanksgiving; so I doubt not, but richer Habits, especially if our Places, Offices, and Stations, and Ranks oblige us to it, may be allowable; but it is one thing to go rich and gaudy meerly because our condition requires it, another to delight and take pleasure, and great satisfaction in it; for this insensibly emasculates the Mind, depresses it, and renders it vain and enamoured with the World,

Every Man that strives for Mastery, is temperate in all things, saith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. It is evident, that we all profess striving for an incorruptible Crown, and if Temperance in all things be necessary in order to it, this Temperance must necessarily appear in our Cloaths, as well as Diet, else the Tem-

perance is partial, and consequently no part of that Wisdom which is from above.

A Christian should be the humblest, gravest, and modestest Creature living; and who can be so irrational as to think that delight in imitating every Fashion, is agreeable to this Gravity, Modesty, and Humility? and though what *Judas* said, *John* 12. 5. was spoke with an ill end, yet it may justly enough be applied to the case in hand; *Why might not such things purely superfluous, be sold, and given to the poor?* That by such things there is Injustice done to the poor, who might be fed with these superfluities, wise Men have complained in most Ages; In the primitive Church, when Men priz'd Religion at a higher rate, it was a thing very common for persons who were converted, for Women especially, when God was pleased to give them a vehement desire after the felicity of the next Life, to sell all their richer Garments, and feed Christ's poor Disciples with the Money, and for the future, to give that away to charitable uses,

which

which formerly they used to bestow upon their Luxury in Cloathing. They knew they had nobler things to mind, than adorning this Lump of Flesh, which was shortly to be Meat for Worms, and to putrifie in the Grave; and thought, while they were curious in dressing, and covering their Bodies, they should forget to trim their Souls; and while their better part and its Beauty engrossed their desires and affections, they were the less curious in the setting out and garnishing of the other.

Women, as they are naturally more prone to this Delight, so the *Apostles*, in giving Precepts about Cloathing, do in a peculiar manner address themselves to them, justly supposing that if it be unlawful for them, Men, who have not ordinarily that inclination nor those temptations to it that they have, ought to think themselves obliged to live above it; and though I do not think, that in those places broidered Hair, and Gold, and Pearls, and costly

1 *Tim.* 2. 9, 1 *Pet.* 3. 3.

Array, are absolutely forbidden, yet they are so far forbid, as they are impediments to Godliness, to Shame-facedness, Sobriety, Modesty, Good Works, and the Growth of the hidden Man in the Heart, and to that Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great Price; as is evident from the opposition the Apostles make between the one and the other; and that delight in such cloaths, is a great Enemy to all these, I need produce no other Argument, but what is drawn from common Experience.

Vid. Chrysost. *Hom.* 10. *in Col.*

That which is usually pleaded for Peoples going rich, and splendid, that by doing so, they set poor men to work, who would be at a loss for a Livelihood, if they did not take off their Commodities, such as modish Laces, Ribbands, Silks, Velvets, Embroideries, *&c.* is a pretence rather than an argument, and seems rather invented, as a *Salvo* for Peoples Vanity, than a testimony of the sincerity of their intentions; for, not to mention,

mention, that at this rate men might argue, that Players, Fencers, Bull-baiters, Juglers, &c. would want employment, if men did not go to see their Sports; were there no persons to take off such things at their hands, men would betake themselves to other trades and callings, and professions. However, in these cases, it's worth examining our Consciences, whether we wear these things out of compassion to the poor Workmen, or out of Pride, and Delight in the Pomp and Splendor of the World; and if we deal faithfully with our hearts, we shall soon find, that the pity we pretend to the Workmen, is only a Cloak to cover the secret satisfaction we take in conforming to the World; and this is evident from hence, that let the Workmen work never so hard, if the thing they make, be not exactly in the Fashion, I see no person so chritable as to take it off of their hands.

There is no doubt but a Woman, who is married, is in a great measure obliged to please her Husband, and the A-

poſtle ſeems to allow ſo much, 1 *Cor.* 7. 34. and from hence this Concluſion is commonly drawn, that if it be the Husbands pleaſure, that the Wife ſhall go fine and gaudy, it is her duty to obey; nor do I perceive, that Divines do ordinarily find fault with this Concluſion; for fine Cloaths being things in themſelves indifferent, lawful, or unlawful, according to the End and Deſign Men and Women have in them, and the uſe they make of them; if the party's Conſcience that wears them, bears her witneſs, that not out of any delight or ſatisfaction, or ſecret pleaſure in ſuch Gauds and empty things, but meerly out of obedience to Her Husband, ſhe both buys and puts them on, much may be ſaid in her juſtification; for though this deſire in her Husband may be irregular, and an Argument that he hath no very great ſenſe of Religion, yet the thing being in it ſelf indifferent, the Wife in this caſe may lawfully comply, as Mothers and Nurſes pleaſe froward Children by whiſtling,

Vid. Cypr. *de Habit. Virg. Ed.* Oxon. *p.* 95.

whistling, or singing a Childish Tune to them. It was from hence, that Queen *Esther* professes to God in her Prayer, that it was not any fondness to that rich habit she wore, or any delight she took in it, that made her put it on, but a desire to comply with the King; and that, as to the Cloaths themselves, she looked upon them as menstruous Rags. So that the Result of all is this: *Est.* 14. 16.

Rich Cloaths may be worn, 1. Provided that we do not wear them out of emulation, with an intent to vye with our Neighbours, or to let them see, that we have as much Money, and can afford it as well as they. 2. Provided that all Pride and Ostentation in things of this nature be laid aside, and that we do not think our selves the better Men for these Accoutrements, nor despise others, who either will not, or cannot imitate us. 3. Provided that we do not make them Allurements to Lusts, or Baits of Vanity, nor wear them to attract the Applause, and Courtship, and Commendations of Spectators, nor

hope to be therefore admired by the Croud, or Men of little consideration, nor seek to deceive others by this outside, thereby to obtain our base and sinister Designs. 4. Provided that the Place, Calling, Office and Dignity in the Kingdom or Common-wealth we live in, require it. 5. Provided that we spend but very little time in putting on such Habits. 6. Provided that in the putting of them on, or wearing of them, we reflect much on the Nobler Garb of the King's Daughter, which is all glorious within, and how far greater satisfaction it is to be cloathed with the garment of Righteousness and Humility. 7. Provided that we do it only to please those whom God hath made our Superiors and Governors, whether in the Civil or Oeconomick State. 8. Provided that in these Habits we behave our selves with that Modesty, Gravity, and Gentleness, as becomes Christians. 9. Provided that we do not go to the extream of every Fashion, but keep within the compass of these Modes, and imitate the most religious, and the most mo-

moderate persons. 10. Provided that we do deny our selves in the number of them, and bestow the superfluous upon those that want them more than we, or give something equivalent to such as are in straights and necessities; in a word, that we do not forget to cloath the naked, nor hide our selves from our own Flesh, as God speaks, *Isa.* 58. 7.

With these Restrictions I doubt not, but rich Cloaths may lawfully be wore, though still I say, that the plainer and more modest our outward Habit is, the nearer we approach that Christian Simplicity, which God hath the greatest value for. But for any delight in splendid Habits, or being pleased, or tickling our Fancy and Imagination with them, that's a thing which no serious Christian can allow of, and the Primitive Believers were so peremptorily against it, that they scarce looked upon such persons as Christians.

To this purpose, St. *Cyprian* doth very pathetically address himself to the Virgins of that Age. *Some of you,* saith he, *are rich, and abound in Wealth, and these pretend*

pretend that they may lawfully make a shew of their Riches in their outward Dress, and use those Blessings God hath given them. But be it known to you, that she is properly rich, that is rich toward God, and she only wealthy, who is wealthy in Christ Jesus; *these are the true Riches which are Spiritual, Divine, and Heavenly, which lead us unto God, and are like to continue with us in the presence of God for ever: But as to other things which are pleasing to the world, and remain in the world, those ought to be despised as much as the world it self, whose Pomp and Glory we then renounced, when in our Baptism we gave out selves up to God. St.* John *therefore adjures us*, Love not the World, nor the things that are in the World; for if any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World, and the World passes away, and the Lust thereof, but he that doth the

Cyprian *de Habit. Virgin.*

the Will of God abideth for ever, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 16.

Therefore Divine and Eternal Objects muſt be purſued, and all things done according to the will of God, *that we may tread in our great Maſters ſteps. Thou ſaiſt thou art rich, but St.* Paul *anſwers the Objection, and confines thy Garments and Habit to certain bounds, and ſo doth St.* Peter; *and if they oblige even Wives to the obſervance of this Rigor, and Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, who have ſomewhat to plead for themſelves, becauſe they muſt pleaſe their Husbands, how much more is a Virgin tied to live up to theſe holy Rules, who hath no excuſe for her gaudy Dreſs? Thou ſaiſt, thou art rich, and canſt afford it; but all that thou canſt do, is not therefore lawful to do, nor muſt the luxurious deſires of the Fleſh, which riſe only from Ambition, go beyond the Limits of Virginity, ſince it is written,* All things are lawful, but all are not expedient. *Thou ſaiſt, thou art rich, and therefore thinkeſt thou maiſt uſe what* God *hath beſtowed upon thee; uſe it in the name of* God; *but then uſe it to ſuch things as* God *hath commanded.*

manded. Let the poor find that thou art rich, let the needy feel that thou doſt abound. gain the favor of thy God by thy Patrimony, feed the hungry Jeſus, and lay up thy treaſure there where Thieves cannot break in and ſteal; get thee Poſſeſſions, but let them be Celeſtial, ſuch as the Moth cannot corrupt, nor Ruſt eat away, nor the Hail deſtroy, nor the Sun dry up, nor the Rain melt away: Thou ſinneſt againſt God, if thou thinkeſt thy Riches are given thee not to make a wholeſome uſe of them: God hath given man a Voice, muſt he therefore ſing amorous, and undecent, and obſcene Tunes with it? God hath made Iron, muſt thou therefore murther men with it? And becauſe he hath vouchſafed unto us Frankincenſe, and Wine, and Fire, muſt we therefore ſacrifice to Idols? Or, becauſe thy Herds and Flocks are great, muſt thou therefore commit Idolatry with them? Riches are great Temptations, except they be employed to pious uſes. In Scripture the Whore of Baby-

Rev. 17. 4. *lon is brought in array'd in Purple and Scarlet Colours, and decked with Gold, and Precious Stone, and*

and Pearl, and her Judgment is said to be great and terrible; and the Prophet Esaias *threatens a fatal humiliation to the Daughters of* Sion, *because of their Bravery; when they were exalted thus, they fell, being trimmed thus, they deserved to have their Perfumes turned into a stink; being deck'd with Silk and Purple, they could not put on Christ; being adorned with Bracelets and Jewels, they lost the true Ornaments of their Hearts and Consciences; Who would not shun that whereby others have perished? Who would desire that which hath been a Sword and Arrow to others? If a man should drop down dead upon drinking of a Cup, we should conclude it was Poyson that killed him; and what stupid Ignorance of the Truth must it be, what madness to be fond of that which hath always done, and still doth hurt, and to imagine thou shalt not be undone by that, whereby thou knowest others have been ruined?*

Thus far St. *Cyprian*, who lived about the year of our Lord 248. an eminent Bishop, and who afterwards died a Martyr in Christ's Cause, and in all probability

bability ſpoke not only his own ſenſe but the judgment of the Univerſal Church in this Point, I will conclude this Subject with a Paſſage out of *Tertullian*, S. *Cyprian*'s Maſter, who thus reaſons the Caſe with the Women of his Age:

Tertul. de cult. Fœm. l. 2. c. 13.

'What means that ſaying, Let your 'light ſhine before men? Why doth 'our Lord call us the light of the World? 'Why doth he compare us to a City 'ſeated upon a Hill, if we ſhine not in 'darkneſs, or do not ſtand up among the 'drowned part of the World? If thou 'hide thy candle under a Buſhel, thou 'muſt needs, being left in the dark, be 'ſubject to numberleſs aſſaults. Theſe 'are the things which make us lights of 'the World, even our good works. 'True goodneſs is not enamoured with 'darkneſs, but rejoyces to be ſeen, and 'is glad to be pointed at. A modeſt and 'ſhame-faced Chriſtian doth not think 'it enough, that he is ſo, but he delights 'to appear ſo too; for ſuch muſt be 'the fullneſs of his vertues, that it may 'burſt

'burſt out from the mind within, to the 'habit without, and preſs from the con-'ſcience to the outward man, that men 'from without may ſee what ſtore, and 'treaſure he hath in the ſecret receſſes 'of his Soul. Voluptuouſneſs, and 'Wantonneſs muſt be renounced, for 'by theſe the Vertue of Faith loſes its 'maſculine vigor. I doubt the hand 'that hath been uſed to Bracelets, will 'never endure the ſturdineſs of a Chain 'for Chriſt Jeſus; nor can I apprehend, 'how the Knee uſed to a ſoft Garter 'will be able to endure the Stocks, or 'Racks for the Goſpel; and I very much 'queſtion, whether that Neck which 'gliſtered with Pearls, and precious 'Stones, will ever yield unto the Sword 'of perſecution; therefore my beloved, 'let's chuſe hard and uneaſie things and 'we ſhall not feel them, let's forſake the 'pleaſant things of this World, and we 'ſhall not deſire them; theſe are the 'Anchors of our hope; let's lay aſide 'theſe outward gayeties, if we aim at 'the Wedding Garment in Heaven; let 'not Gold prove the object of our love,

'by

'by which the ſins of *Iſrael* are expreſ-
'ſed; let's hate that which hath un-
'done the *Patriarchs*, and was adored
'by them after they had forſaken the
'fountain of living waters. Come
'forth beloved, and ſet before you the
'rich attire of the Prophets and Apo-
'ſtles of our Lord; take your fairneſs
'from their ſimplicity, your bluſhes
'from their modeſty, paint your eyes
'with their ſhamefacedneſs, and your
'lips with their ſelf-denial in ſpeaking;
'inſtead of Pendants, inſert in your ears
'the word of God, and let your necks
'bear the yoke of Chriſt Jeſus; ſubmit
'your heads to your own Husbands,
'and then you'll be dreſſed like Chriſti-
'ans; employ your hands about Wool,
'and as much as you can, keep at home,
'and this will render you more amia-
'ble than Gold; Clothe your ſelves
'with the Silk of Innocence, with the
'Velvet of Holineſs, and with the Pur-
'ple of Chaſtity, and thus adorned,
'God will fall in love with you.

10. Delight in *Painting and Patching, and artificial meliorations of the Face*

Face and Skin, to please and delude spectators, or to draw others into admiration of our persons, as it is a thing which the very Heathens have condemn'd for reasons drawn from the light of nature, so it is almost needless to discourse of it, or to batter it with Arms and Weapons out of the Magazine of the Gospel. This Delight hath in most Ages been infamous, and the thing it self counted incongruous with the Law of our very Creation. The Fathers of the second, third and fourth Centuries, derive the Original of it from the Devil, and will allow nothing of this nature in any person that looks like a Christian. It is a sign that the Spirit of Christ doth not dwell in a person that dares delight in such Vanities; for that Spirit inclines the Soul to other things, makes her regardless of Beauty and external Comeliness, obliges her solicitous about inward Accomplishments, and how she may please him that died, and hath purchased an eternal Salvation

Vid. Celada commentar. in Judith, c. 10. Plutarch. in Apophthegm. Ælian var. Hist. l. 8.

for her; and it's enough, that he that hath *not the Spirit of Christ,* *Rom.* 8. 9. *is none of his.* A Soul that hath the Spirit of Christ, hath other things to do, than ſpend her time and care in mending the Face; for *they that are after the Fleſh, do* *Rom.* 8. 5. *mind the things of the Fleſh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.* And what are the things of the Spirit, but ſetting our affections upon the things which are above, meditating of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, longing after the light of God's countenance, deſpiſing the world, ſelf-denial, taking up the Croſs of Chriſt, a tranſcendent love of God, a burning zeal to his Glory, laying up in ſtore a good foundation againſt the time to come, growing ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, reſiſting temptations, growing in Grace, labouring after a greater hatred of ſin, a greater fore-taſte of Heaven, a greater conformity to the Will of God, a greater ſenſe of the love of God, *&c.* And he that in good earneſt minds theſe things,

things, will have no great desire to busie himself about such pitiful, trivial and impertinent things; these will be trash and dirt to him, and his Soul will soar above them, and scorn them, as the Devils Lime-twigs, whereby he lies in wait to deceive. And though I will not deny, but that a man in case of danger, and when his Life is in jeopardy, or when he would pass through a party of his Enemies, may lawfully disguise himself, and by Art change and alter his Countenance, that he may not be known; and though a man who hath lately had the Small Pox, or hath been Sun-burnt, or whose Face hath been parch'd with Wind, may lawfully take care by ordinary helps to reduce his face to his former, or native colour and complexion; and though we do not judge it against the Law of God, to hide some great Blemish or Defect in the Face, whereby Spectators may be offended, and particularly Women that are with Child, frighted; and though it is not inconsistent with the Rule of the Gospel, to wash the Face when

dirty; yet all those Pains and additional Washes, and artificial black Spots, whereby Men and Women endeavour either to set off their complexion the better, to give themselves a more pleasing Colour, or to mend their Meen, or to make themselves look more beautiful, or to attract the Eyes, and Admiration, and sometimes the unlawful *Amours* of those they converse withal, are things which a Christian must be a stranger to.

When I say Men, it is not without reason; for we read of such a Beast as *Paul*, the Second Pope of *Rome*, who whenever he went abroad, painted himself, that the Beauty of his Face might in some measure be answerable to the Comelineſs of his Stature, which was procere and tall; and it is to be feared, that this Effeminacy dwells in too many Persons of the Masculine Sex at this day: However, as Women are usually more faulty this way, than Men, so they give us but small hopes to believe, that they are Heirs of Heaven, while they

Platin. in Paul 2.

they are so industrious to please their Acquaintance and others here on Earth.

St. *Paul* would not please Men, no not in the Ceremonies of the Law, which were things formerly commanded by God, thinking it unworthy of a Christian, that had been freed from that Yoke by the Son of God; and how unworthy must it be then to please Men in things which God hath never commanded, nay by many hints and places discovered his dislike of? How justly may God look upon it as Presumption, to alter that Face which he thought fit to create in that shape it is of? And what is it but contending with our Maker, and expostulating with the Potter, Why hast thou made me thus? and controuling his Art and Wisdom, while not content with the Countenance he hath given, we seek to appear in a better?

As we are Christians, Sincerity must be our Character, not only in heart, but in the outward behaviour; and what Sincerity can there be in cheating Men with our Faces, and to make them

believe that to be natural, which we know is counterfeit and artificial? We that are naturally prone to Pride, and Levity, and Lightneſs of Deportment, had not need encourage it by ſuch Incentives, and put Oyl to that Fire, which, without great help is apt to burn into Hell. We ſhall meet with impediments enough from the World and the Devil, in our ſpiritual race; it is madneſs therefore to encreaſe thoſe Obſtaſtacles by new inventions of our own, and we that know how apt every thing is to damp our holy Fervors, had not need make uſe of ſuch vanities to extinguiſh them.

In the whole Scripture we read of no Women that ever painted themſelves, but one that was curſed to a Proverb, even *Jezabel*, 2 Kings 9. 33.

Euſeb. l. 5. *c.* 15. And *Euſebius* makes mention of a great inſtrument of the Devil, whereby he ſow'd Hereſies in the Church, that uſed this Trade, *viz. Maximilla.* Even among the Heathen, thoſe that did ſo, were none of the beſt Fame and Credit in the World,

World, such as *Poppæa*, *Nero*'s Wife, and others; and in holy Writ, for the most part this delight is described as meritricious, and a quality of Strumpets and Harlots, as we see, *Ezek.* 23. 40.

And certainly neither these Examples nor Descriptions can be any great enticement to a Christian to imitate such infamous Patterns, who is to remember those who have spoken to him in the Name of the Lord, and to follow their Faith, considering the end of their conversation, *Heb.* 13. 7.

It was an excellent Character St. *Gregory Nazianzene* gave of the pious *Gorgonia*; *No Gold*, saith he, *adorned her Temples, no flaxen hair, no borrowed locks, no artificial curles flew about her sacred head, no flowing mantles, no transparent vails, no looser garb that wanton'd in the Air, no costly stones vying with the brightness of the Stars, no Painters Arts help'd to grace her noble frame, no operator assisted her to countermine the work of God in her, and* Greg. Naz. *in laudem* Gorg.

by deceitful colours to hide the curious fabrick of her Face, or to prostitute the divine shape that was in her, to wanton and impurer eyes, or to vitiate her natural Image, which was reserved for God and another World, by an adulterous, fictitious Beauty. But even then, when she was acquainted with all the tricks and modes of ornaments, she would acknowledge and own none but what her Piety, and the Harmony of her Soul did give her. No other Red pleased her, but what her modest blushes caused; no White but what fasting and abstinence brought into her Cheeks; and as for Painting and modish Looks, and borrow'd Beauty, she left those impertinencies and vanities, to actors and Ministers of the Stage, persons who have forgot to blush, and are ashamed of nothing so much as of sobriety and gravity.

This is an example for all Christian Women to write Copies by; and though the age we live in, hath long ago learned to despise this self-denial, as a starcht formality and precise niceness, yet that doth not make it of less value before Almighty God, who sees with other

other eyes, and is resolved to rectifie these wilful mistakes, if other means here on Earth will not do it, with Eternal Vengeance.

To this purpose St. *Cyprian*, *Art not thou afraid, vain Woman, who makest use of Paint, and Washes, and such other curious fooleries about thy Face, art not thou afraid that thy Creator, when thou comest before him, will not know thee, but exclude thee rather from the promised Inheritance? May not he reasonably use the language of a Censor, and a Judge, and say, This is not my Creature, here I see nothing of my Image; Thou hast polluted thy skin with false applications, the hair I gave thee is changed by Adulterous colours, thy face is nothing but a lie, the figure of it is corrupted, it is another thing than what it was; how canst thou see God, when thou hast not the looks God gave thee, but infected rather by the Devil? Him thou hast follow'd, thou hast imitated the old Serpent, thou hast borrowed thy Ornaments from thine Enemy, and with him thou must burn.* De Habit. virg. p. 100.

burn. O my Friends, are not these things to be considered by God's servants? Are not these things at which they may just tremble day and night? Let those who are married and flatter themselves, that they do it in complisance to their Husbands look to it, and see whether they do not in making such excuses, accuse themselves of being partners in the sin; and as for Virgins and Maids who use these unlawful arts, I cannot reckon them in the number of true Virgins, but judge rather, that they ought to be removed from other young Women, like so many rotten sheep, that they do not infect others by their corruption.

In vain do people plead here, that the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 12. 23. allows us to bestow more abundant honor on those members of the Body, which we think to be less honourable, and therefore a homely Face may be trick'd up with suitable paints, and spots, and washes; for not to mention that the Apostle by those members doth not mean the face and cheeks, but such as modesty bids us conceal; The honour there spoken of,

of, cannot be underſtood of paints and waſhes, for they are no Ornaments, but diſſimulations and deceptions, and the honour that is allow'd to ſuch uncomly parts, is hiding of them from the ſight of Men, which I ſuppoſe ſuch vain perſons will never practiſe on their Faces.

And what if the ingredients of ſuch Fucus's be Gods Creatures, ſo is poiſon too, and yet we ſee few perſons ſo mad, as to make uſe of it ſo as to drink it, nor doth it ſignifie much, that perſons may have a good end in all this, ſince we are not to do evil, that good may come out of it. It's granted, that natural beauty may provoke ſpectators to luſt, and laſcivious deſires, as well as artificial, yet from thence it follows not, that therefore the artificial ought to be allow'd of, as well as the natural, for there is not the ſame reaſon for the one that there is for the other; the natural, God beſtows and cannot be blamed, nor did the perſon that hath it ſpend time, and pains, and care to get it; the artificial as people cannot endeavour after it, but their corrupt minds and affecti-

affections must prompt them to it; so it argues discontentedness with what God hath thought fit to give them, and an itching desire to deceive the unwary spectator. And suppose natural Beauty allures and tempts voluptuous Men, must therefore more evil be added to the former? must people therefore increase temptations with artificial Beauty? Is not the World bad enough? And must it be made worse? Must sin be therefore multiplied, and the sickly minds of carnal men, more and more distemper'd? Is it not enough that natural Beauty is so dangerous? and shall we encrease the danger by tricks and artifices?

St. *Chrysostomes* advice here is very seasonable; 'Consider I beseech you, *Sarah* and *Rebeckah*, and such Matrons, who have all undervalued this vanity, and *Leah*, tho' she was not handsom, nor so well beloved as *Rachel*, yet used no art to make her so, but the lineaments, and features of her face remained as nature

Homil. 31. *in Matth.*

'ture had disposed them, nor was she 'at all concerned at her homelineſs, 'though educated by Parents who were 'Pagans and Idolaters; and shalt thou 'whose head is Christ, and who pre-'tendest to be a Believer, approve of 'these inventions of the Devil? Dost 'not thou remember the water that was 'sprinkled upon thy face in Baptism, 'nor the Sacrament whereby thy lips 'and tongue were blessed? Didst thou 'seriously think of this, whatever fond 'desires thou mightest naturally have 'after such dangerous Ornaments, thou 'wouldst not dare to fulfil them; Re-'member, thou didst vow to be con-'formable to Christ Jesus, and thou 'wilt hate this deformity, for he de-'lights not in these deceitful colours, 'but requires a sublimer Beauty, even 'that of thy Soul and Spirit; why 'shouldst thou attempt a thing so vain, 'so needless and superfluous? There is 'no defect in any of Gods works, nor 'is there any thing that stands in need 'of thy making it better than it is; 'none dare add any new strokes to the

'Picture

'Picture of a King, and if he dares, h
'ſmarts for it; when thou dareſt ad
'nothing to the workmanſhip of Ma
'art not thou afraid to make Gods wor
'better than it is? Doth not the fir
'of the burning lake come into thy
'mind, and doſt not thou think how
'thy ſoul will one day be totally forſak
'en, whoſe concerns thou muſt need
'neglect now while thou applieſt al
'thy care and ſtudy and thoughts to thy
'body? Why do I ſay, thou neglect
'eſt thy ſoul; thy very body doth no
'enjoy what thou wiſheſt for, which
'is evident from hence, becauſe, while
'thou ſeekeſt to be handſom, thou doſt
'really appear homely; thou ſeekeſt
'by this to pleaſe thy Husband, where
'as it cannot but be a grief to him, no
'is it he only that blames thee, but o
'thers alſo do deſpiſe thee. Thou
'wouldeſt fain appear young, but thy
'very paint haſtens old Age; and where
'as thou fancieſt that this will make
'thee look glorious, thou doſt but pre
'pare for thy ſhame. But why do I
'mention things of this nature, while I

'forgo

forgo the greater arguments, as that thou offendeſt God, undermineſt modeſty, raiſeſt jealouſie, and makeſt proſtitute Women thy patterns. All which being laid together, I beſeech you deſpiſe theſe helliſh Ornaments and unprofitable arts, and renouncing this formoſity, or rather deformity, learn to be ambitious of that Beauty, which Angels do deſire, which God is enamour'd with, and which cannot but be pleaſing to your Husbands too, that having ſpent and led your life honourably here, you may attain at laſt to everlaſting Glory.

11. Delight in *Dancing* is another common Recreation, and though Dancing in it ſelf, as it is an agility or motion of the Body, whereby the body is preſerved in health, and vigor, cannot be ſaid to be unlawful, no more than ſinging and exerciſing the tongue (not to mention that agility of body is a gift of God, and if it be moved and exerciſed with obſerving time and meaſure, there is nothing in the word of God directly or indirectly againſt it) yet the manner

manner and uſe, and the ends and de
ſigns of it, make a very great diffe
rence in the lawfulneſs and unlawfu
neſs of it.

That *David* Danced before the Ar
of God, to teſtifie his joy, and exulta
tion at ſo great a bleſſing, we read,
Sam. 6. 14. and *Michaels* deſpiſing him
for it is noted as an errour, for which
by a Divine judgment ſhe was doom'
to be childleſs; *v.* 23. which ſhews
that God approv'd of that expreſſion o
his joy, and the Prophets of *Iſrael* per
mitted the Women to Sing and Dance
and to anſwer one another, Saul *hath*
ſlain his thouſands, *and* David *his ten*
thouſands, 1 *Sam.* 18. 6, 7. a cuſtom
which in all probability they had learn
ed of *Miriam* the *Propheteſs*, the Siſter
of *Aaron*, who after the victory over the
Ægyptians took a Timbrel in her hand,
and all the Women went out after her
with Timbrels and with Dances, *Exod.*
15. 20. But then this Dancing was
ſtill upon a Spiritual account, with an
intent to praiſe God, and to glorifie him
not only in their ſouls, but bodies too;
and

beſides, the Women Danced by themſelves, and the Men by themſelves without mixing one with another, and only upon extraordinary occaſions, when Gods power and goodneſs was to be Celebrated, and the younger ſort were to be incouraged to chearful *Hallelujahs*, which is an argument, that Dancing out of wantonneſs, or promiſcuous Dancing, Men and Women Dancing together to pleaſe ſpectators, and to divert themſelves, hath no warrant from the ſacred Oracles.

This is the reaſon why mixt and laſcivious Dancing hath been condemned, not only by the Primitive Fathers, but by almoſt all the Reformed Churches; nay the more ſerious ſort of Papiſts look upon it as a thing intolerable among Chriſtians. He that will not wilfully blind his eyes, muſt neceſſarily ſee, that this mixt Dancing had its original from the Heathens, who Worſhiped their Gods by ſuch extravagant motions, and there are not a few precepts in the Goſpel, which forbid us to *work the will of the Gentiles, and to live*

in the Flesh, to *the lusts of Men*, as St. *Peter* phrases it, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2, 3. And indeed he that will impartially consider the extent of that Chambering and wantonness, St. *Paul* speaks against *Rom.* 13. 13. must confess, that this mixt Dancing, as it is usually practised, is comprehended under it. To any man that reads the Scripture with attention and soberness, it will appear very evident, that nothing is prest more by the Apostles, than gravity, modesty and great decency in our postures, actions, speeches, cloathing and behaviour; and how this mixt and jovial Dancing, is agreeable to all this, no sober man can easily imagine.

That this mixt Dancing, though not necessarily and naturally, yet for the most part through the vitiousness and corruption, that is in the generality of mankind, is an apparent occasion of lasciviousness and levity, and impure lusts, and an incentive to effeminateness, pride and vanity, is a thing past controversie, and then sure Christianity can give no encouragement to it. The

usual

uſual concomitants of this ſport are drinking, fooliſh and frothy talk, and other immodeſt poſtures and actions, ſo that to plead for it, is to plead for an accumulation of ſins and enormities. And what doth this ſport betray, but a weak, ſoft, eaſie, vain and empty mind? What ſnares are hereby laid for ſpectators to entertain evil and dangerous thoughts, which too often hurry them on to impurer enterprizes, and when ſo many Councils, Synods, and wiſe and learned men have apprehended the danger of it, writ againſt it, preached againſt it, made it their buſineſs to enquire into the nature of it, and upon examination of its tendencies and conſequences, have both publickly and privately repreſented it, as improper for Chriſtians, and an enemy to that ſeriouſneſs, which ought to be their eſſential Character; it muſt be either pride or ſtupidity, that makes men ſtubborn or careleſs under ſuch cenſures. And is it probable, that people who never ſtudied the point, or at the beſt, ſurvey'd, and look'd into

it negligently, ſhould be ſo well able to judge of it, as thoſe who upon weighing what can be ſaid for and againſt it, have at laſt concluded and infer'd the undecency, and unlawfulneſs of it?

The Romans when they were yet Heathens, counted Dancing a very diſhonourable thing, and *Saluſt* tells us of *Sempronia*, that ſhe was more than ordinarily vers'd in Singing and Dancing, which, *ſaith he*, was more than became a grave and honeſt Matron; To this purpoſe *Cicero* affirms of a good man, that rather than dance before ſpectators, he would loſe a very conſiderable Legacy; it was laid to *Lucius Murena*'s charge, as a crime, that he had Danced when he was in *Aſia*; and *Cicero* obſerves upon that paſſage, that no man ſure would Dance, that was any way ſober, it being the Quality of a Madman, and therefore among the errors, and miſdemeanours, he objects againſt *Anthony*, he brings in Dancing for

Vid. P. Martyr. loc. com. claſſ. 2. c. 11.

for one. These were the thoughts of the Heathen Sages, before the flood-gates of debauchery were open'd, and while *Rome* retain'd somewhat of her ancient sobriety; and what witnesses will such Men be against Christians, who are taught to go beyond Heathens in gravity and sobriety?

What if this mixt and promiscuous Dancing, be not expresly forbid in Scripture? no more is the belief of *Mahomets* riding upon his *Alborach* or white Steed to Heaven, no more is the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, and the *Mass*, and the Popes *Triple Crown*, *Purgatory*, and the *Immaculate Conception* of the *Virgin Mary*; yet what serious Protestants will infer therefore, that these are lawful Doctrines and Positions? It's enough, that there are such lessons set down there, which any rational Man may easily conclude to be inconsistent with such recreations. It's enough that the Apostle forbids all those things which the *Greeks* call κώμοι, which signifies Feasting mixt with Dancing, *Gal.* 5. 21. we translate the

word *revelling*, but it includes the extravagant action of mixt Dancing whereby lusts and vanities are kindled or encouraged in the minds of men and he asserts, that they that use such things, or delight in them, *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Nor will it avail here to say, that if any lascivious and impure desires be raised by this mixt Dancing, Men and Women one with another, that this is only by accident, the thing it self may be harmless enough; for in things of Morality, and where Conscience is concern'd, we must not always take our measure by the nature of the thing, but very often by the humour and temper of sinful Men, that make use of it, as the learned *Peter Martyr* very well observes; for let's grant that here and there a sober Man may be found, who can with the greatest chastity of mind be both a spectator, and an actor of such promiscuous Dancings, but what becomes all this while of the multitude, and of the greatest part of Men and

P. Mart. loc. cit.

and Women, which are present at such sports, who cannot, will not keep within bounds? so that in this case we are not to respect what may possibly be done, but what for the most part uses to be done; In things of a moral nature, we must not go to the very edge of that which is lawful, but keep within a considerable distance of it, for the nearer we come to the utmost bounds, the nearer we approach to that which is unlawful, which is the reason, why the Apostle bids us avoid the very appearance of evil, 1 *Thess.* 5.22.

I do not deny, but Men may do worse, but what necessity is there for their doing that which is bad, to avoid that which is worse? Must I therefore slander and abuse a Man, because it is a less sin than to murther him?

I know such Doctrines are usually branded with the name of foolish preciseness, but sure I am, they are agreeable to that wisdom which is from above; and he that means to arrive to this wisdom, must of necessity become a fool, a fool in the eyes of World,

and that muſt be a Chriſtians greate
glory; for *know ye not that the friend*
ſhip of the World is enmity with God
whoſoever therefore will be a friend of th
World, is the enemy of God, Jam. 4. 4
upon which words *An*
Summ. Part. 2. *tonius* thus paraphraſes
tit. 6. c. 6. ſſ. 3. 'A friend of the Worl
'is he that loves th
'pomp, the laſciviouſneſs, the prid
'and vain glory of the World, and h
'that will pleaſe Men in things of thi
'nature, things uſually found in pro
'miſcuous Dancings, becomes an ene
'my of God.

Ludovicus Vives tells us of ſome poo
Indians, that were brought from th
farther parts of *Aſia*, who ſeeing ſom
of our *Europeans* Dancing together
wonder'd what madneſs and fury ha
poſſeſs'd them; indeed he that ſhoul
ſtand upon a Hill afar of, withou
hearing any Muſick, and ſee peopl
skip about, and ſometimes beat th
Earth with their feet, ſometimes li
themſelves up into the Air, ſometime
in ſuch a poſture, ſometimes in ano
the

ther, could think no leſs, than that they were forſaken of their reaſon. I need not here alledge any examples of Men and Women, who have found by ſad experience, what a ſad Exit their Dancing and revelling hath had, how in the Ball, which *Lodowick* the deſign'd Arch-Biſhop of *Magdeburg* gave his kindred and relations, the houſe fell upon the Dancers heads, and cruſh'd the *Burgemaſter* and his friends to death; nor how that vertuous Virgin in *Famianus Strada* was raviſhed in a Ball. The misfortune that befel *John* the Baptiſt through the jocular Dancing of *Herodias*, ought to fright devout perſons from having any eſteem and veneration for it; upon which paſſage St. *Chryſoſtom* thus comments, 'Where 'there is laſcivious Dancing, there the Devil 'is always preſent; God hath not given 'us feet for Dancing, but to walk mo-'deſtly, not to skip like Camels, but 'that we might be fit to ſtand one

De Bell. Belg. l. 1.

Hom. 49. *in Matth.*

*** 'day

'day in the Quire of Angels; If the 'body be deformed, or disfigured by 'ſuch leaping, how much more the 'ſoul? ſuch Dances make the Devil 'Dance, and this way men are cheated 'by the Miniſters of darkneſs. It were endleſs to rehearſe here, what Men of learning and wiſdom have ſaid againſt this ſport; one paſſage out of *Cornelius Agrippa* may ſerve for all; 'Nothing 'can be more ridiculous 'than promiſcuous Dan-'cing; This lets looſe the reins of 'wantonneſs, is a faithful friend to ſin, 'the great incentive to uncleanneſs, an 'enemy to chaſtity, and a recreation 'unworthy of rational Men. Here 'many a Matron hath loſt her honour. 'here many a Virgin hath learned that 'which ſhe had better been totally ig-'norant of; From hence many have 'come away worſe than they were, but 'none better.

De vanit. ſcient. c. 18.

12. Delight in *ſeeing Stage-Plays* muſt not be omitted here; and how far this delight may be allow'd of, and how

how far detested, I cannot shew you better, than by giving you the contents of a Letter, I formerly writ to a young Gentleman upon this Subject.

SIR,

'THough you did pitch upon none of 'the best Casuists, when you sent 'your case to me; yet since you have 'thought fit to ask my opinion, whether 'it be lawful to go and see a Play, a thing 'our Gallants are so exceeding fond of, I 'must crave leave to tell you, that in the 'Primitive ages of the Church, such a 'question from one who professed himself 'a follower of the Holy Jesus, would 'have been looked upon with no very 'pleasant aspect, they supposing that eve-'ry Christian, who knew, or was sensible 'into whose name he was Baptized, un-'derstood, that things of this nature are 'as foreign to Christianity, as lasciviousness and wantonness, and as contrary to 'the design of our noble Religion, which 'is to plant a Spiritual Life in us, as wallowing in voluptuousness or luxury.

'But the Times are altered, and our

'*Virtuoſi* have allowed of it, and what 'men in former ages ſcarce thought fit 'to be named among Chriſtians, this 'hath made not only convenient, but in 'ſome reſpect neceſſary, and eſſential to 'a perſon of Quality; ſo that this Que-'ſtion as the caſe ſtands, may with ſome 'juſtice be ask'd, and even a very ſober 'perſon may now with ſome reaſon de-'mand, whether there be any harm in be-'holding theſe dramatick repreſentati-'ons? And here I would not be thought 'ſo rigid, or fooliſh rather, as if I believed 'no repreſentation of Hiſtory, or Mens a-'ctions in the World lawful, for that 'would be directly contrary to Chriſt's 'own practice, who inſtituted a Sacra-'ment to repreſent his death and paſſion 'by, and to keep up the remembrance of 'it to the Worlds end; and tho' this is not 'acting things to the Life, yet it at leaſt 'imports ſo much, that ſomething Hiſto-'rical may be repreſented in lively and 'ſignificant Characters, the manage-'ment of which muſt be left to the pru-dence and diſcretion of ſober Men.

'But then theſe repreſentations muſt

'be

'be reſtrain'd altogether to vertue and 'goodneſs, and ſuch accompliſhments of 'the Soul, which the wiſeſt & holieſt Men 'in all ages, have been deſirous and ambi-'tious of; and though vertue cannot be 'well either diſcourſed of, or repreſented 'without its oppoſite vice, yet ſuch is the 'nature of vice, ſuch the unhappy conſe-'quences of it, that if either the pleaſure, 'or eaſe, or proſperity and ſucceſs of it 'be ſhewn and acted, tho' but for a few 'minutes, whatever Fate it ends in, it's 'ſo agreeable to the corrupted tempers of 'Men, that it leaves a pleaſing impreſſion 'behind it; nor is the after clap or doleful '*Exit* of it, ſtrong enough to prevent a 'liking or ſatisfaction, eſpecially in the 'younger ſort, who are generally more ta-'ken with its preſent content and titillati-'ons, than frighted with its dull and mud-'dy concluſion; for while its preſent ſuc-'ceſs, and ſweetneſs is acting, the *Cupid* 'ſtrikes the heart, and lays ſuch a founda-'tion there, as mocks all the death and 'ruine, it after ſome time doth end in; I 'doubt not, but the joys of Angels, and 'the triumphs of glorified ſouls might be

'acted

'acted to the life, and great good might 'issue from the gaudy *Opera*, and if ju- 'stice, patience, sobriety, humility, and 'contempt of the World, with all the gar- 'lands, and solid joys that attend them, 'were represented with their future re- 'compense, in a serious way, without jest- 'ing or raillery, not a few Men and Women 'might be signally edified by it, their af- 'fections raised above their ordinary level, 'and their courage kindled to press to- 'wards the noble prize; but then there 'must be nothing of the present amiable- 'ness of vice mingled with the Scenes, for 'tho' vice must almost necessarily be na- 'med in these *living Landskips*, yet it 'should be only named, and never named 'but with horror, and the generosity and 'grandure of vertue only acted to the life, 'for indeed nothing is fit for action, or i- 'mitated but vertue; vice should never 'appear but in its ugly shape, for if you 'dress it in its shining Robes, tho' it be but 'for a quarter of an hour, such is the ve- 'nom of this *Basilisk*, it breaths a poison- 'ous vapour, both on the Actor and the 'Spectator, and while the one comes to

'see

'ſee ſport, and the other to get money 'both go away from the *Theatre* worſe 'than they came; and tho' both come a-'way laughing, yet both prepare for bit-'ter mourning and lamentation.

'I have ſhewn you what *Drama*'s may 'be uſeful and commendable; but *Sir*, all 'this differs very much from the modern 'plays, the aforeſaid queſtion relates to, 'theſe being things fitted for vanity and 'luxury; for in theſe, though the puniſh-'ment of vice, and rewards of vertue are 'repreſented to the life, yet it's done rather 'with advantage to the former, than to 'raiſe the credit of the latter, and the ef-'fect ſhews it, *viz.* the corruption and 'debauchery of youth, and perſons of all 'ſorts and ſizes, which I ſhall more large-'ly ſpeak of in the ſequel.

'The Plays we ſpeak of, are ſuited to 'the looſe humour of the age, which ſeems 'to hate all things that are ſerious, as 'much as Rats-bane, & delights in nothing 'ſo much, as in jeſts and fooleries, and ſee-'ing the moſt venerable things turned in-'to *ridicule*: Here no play reliſhes but 'what is ſtuft with love tricks, and that

'which

'which makes people laugh most, is the 'best written *Comedy*; wantonness is set 'out in its glittering garb, and the melting 'expressions that drop from its lips, are 'so charming to a carnal appetite, that 'the young lad wishes himself almost in 'the same passion and intrigue of Love, 'he sees Acted on the Stage, it looks so 'pleasant end ravishing.

'Here Religion is too often traduced, 'and through the sides of Men that differ 'from our Church, the very foundation of 'Christianity is shaken and undermined; 'not but that Hypocrisie in Religion ought 'to be severely lash'd, but then it must be 'done in a grave, becoming and serious 'way; such as Christ and his Apostles u-'sed against the painted Sepulchres, the '*Pharisees*. The Stage hath that unhappy 'character, that it is looked upon by the 'generality, as the grand place of diver-'tisement: Men come thither not to learn, 'but to be merry; and since acts of hypo-'crisie look so very like acts of true Re-'ligion, the danger is, that while you '*raille* the counterfeit, you hurt the Ori-'ginal, and while you dress the Image in

'a

a fools Coat, the ſubſtance ſuffers in the ridiculous repreſentation.

'So that here Men and Women are inſenſibly poiſon'd, and the good thing they ſee made aukward in an enemy, in time looks but odd and ſtrange in a friend, and by degrees the vertue, is 'hated in good earneſt, becauſe one that 'was in the habit of an hypocrite, did 'practiſe it.

'Here few ſacred things are ſpared, if 'they ſerve to make up the *Decorum* of 'the Act, and Heatheniſm is reduced into 'Chriſtian territories in a pleaſant way. 'The Pagan Gods muſt make the *Drama* 'great, and while theſe are in all the Actors 'mouths, the licentious ſpectator in time 'applies that to the true, which the fond '*Poet* aſcribed to fictitious Deities. Here 'the ſupream Creator is too often reviled 'through the ill language that's given to 'Heathen *Numens*, and things that ſavour 'of real piety, rendred flat, inſipid and impertinent; here all that may raiſe the 'Fleſh into action and deſire, is advanced, 'and whatever ſerves to lay reaſon aſleep, 'and to exalt fancy and imagination, and

'the glory of the World, is made the pro-
'per object of admiration; Here all th
'wanton looks and gestures, and posture
'that be in the mode, are practised accord
'ing to art; and you may remember, you
'have seen people when dismist from a
'Play, strive and labour to get that grace
'and antick meen, they saw in the Mimick
'on the Stage; Here men swear and
'curse, and actually imprecate themselves,
'and tho' they do it under the name of
'the person they act, yet their own tongue
'speaks their sin, & their body is the agent
'that commits it; and thus they damn
'themselves for a Man in imagination.

'And are these things fit for a Christian
'to behold! a Christian who is to be a new
'Creature, a candidate of Eternity, an heir
'of Heaven, an Enemy to the World, a
'spiritual Prince, a King over his lusts, and
'Emperour over his carnal desires? Is this
'a sight agreeable to the strait way, and
'the narrow gate which leads to life?
'Can you, or any man reconcile such
'darkness with light, such Idols with the
'Temple of God? Is there any thing in
'the Gospel more plainly forbid, than con-
'forming

'forming to the World? and what can 'that prohibition import, if conformity 'to the World in beholding these danger-'ous sights, be not in a great measure 'meant by it? We may put forced glosses 'upon the words, but doth not this look 'like the natural sense of them?

'Holiness, for without it no man shall 'ever see the Lord, is the very Character 'of men, who name the name of Christ, 'if they bear not that name in vain; and 'will any man of sense be so bold, as to say, '*that Shews, which have so much sin in 'them, are suitable to that Holiness?* We 'know who said, *Turn away 'mine eyes from beholding Ps.*119.47. '*Vanity*; and who sees not 'that he who delights in such shews, 'neither dares pray that Prayer, nor can 'have any desire to imitate *David* in his 'holiness, for he is pleased with vanity, 'fixes his eyes upon it, makes it the 'pleasing object of his sight, and conse-'quently instead of turning his eyes away 'from it, turns them to it, and would not 'for a World lose that pleasure.

'*If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out,*

'*and cast it from thee*; *for it is profitab*
'*for thee*, *that one of thy members shou*
'*perish*, *and not that thy whole body shou*
'*be cast into Hell*'; said he, who hath pro
'tested, that not the least tittle or *jota* o
'his words shall perish, *Matth.* 5. 29
'If there be any sense in this passage, the
'meaning must necessarily be, that if the
'eye, or beholding an object, prove an
'occasion of evil, the eye must be so
'carefully, and so totally withdrawn
'from that object, as if it were actual-
'ly pluck'd out, or were of no use in
'the body; what an occasion of evil
'the beholding of such Scurrilous shews
'is, none can judge so well as he who
'takes notice, how by these sights,
'the horror which attended some sins,
'is taken off, and men are tempted to
'entertain a more favourable opinion of
'them; how apt upon these occasions
'they are to laugh at those sins which
'require rivers of tears, and to smile
'at the jest they hear, which deserves
'their most rigid censures; how natu-
'ral it is to be affected with these repre-
'sentations? and if there be any thing

'of

of evil in them, how readily is it imbibed, or if not imbibed, yet excuſed, if not totally excuſed, yet qualified, and conſtrued as a thing of no great hurt, and thus its dreadfulneſs abates, and it's afterwards left out in the Catalogue of errors.

'God was either ſo jealous of his own glory, or ſo tender of the ſpiritual welfare of the Iſraelites, that he would not ſuffer them to *take the names of the Heathen Gods in their mouths*, nor ſuffer them familiarly to mention them, for fear their frequent naming of them ſhould leſſen their awful apprehenſions of the ſupream Deity, or they be tempted through that familiarity, to think there was no great harm in worſhiping of them; this was no ceremonial precept, nor judicial: The ſubſtance is moral, and conſequently cannot be ſuppoſed to be aboliſh'd by the death of Chriſt; and ſince God would not permit it to the *Jews*, how ſhould he be ſuppoſed to give leave to Chriſtians, of whom he requires greater ſtrictneſs, to *Exod.* 23. 13.

'be laviſh in ſuch expreſſions? How
'our modern Plays in moſt addreſſ
'wiſhes and impredations, the Heath
'Deities are brought in, I need not
'you: The Actors indeed ſwear
'God in the ſingular number, but
'their entire *Harangues*, or witty ſe
'tences, or expreſſions, which they
'tend ſhall move moſt, the Gods
'call'd in, and that's the grace
'their part. If it be ſaid that this
'done out of a reverential reſpect
'the true God, who is too great to
'mention'd in ſuch trivial ſpeeches
''tis ſoon replied, that it's a very m
'vellous thing, they ſhould ſtand
'awe of the true God, and yet ma
'nothing of ſwearing by him, and taki
'his name in vain; and tho' they min
'their Oaths ſometimes, yet that do
'not excuſe the crime, as long as
'ſhews their willingneſs to act it;
'the truth is, ſuch men ſeek to tu
'Religion again into Paganiſm, ſo
'ſtyle they uſe in their reſpect
'ſpeeches about things above, is fitt
'for that purpoſe.

'I kno

'I know that it's commonly alledg-
ed, that the ſtories which are Acted,
relate to tranſactions among the *Gen-*
tiles, and that it would be incongru-
ous to repreſent their actions, and
not to mention their Deities, or to
ſpeak in their language; but not to
mention, that there is no neceſſity of
repreſenting paſſages of this nature,
there being as noble things among
Chriſtians, that deſerve remembrance,
why cannot the vertues of *Pagans*
be repreſented without mentioning
their Gods, or the ſins and extrava-
gancies of their Gods, whereby cor-
rupted nature is ſo eaſily debauch'd
into a mean opinion of the great So-
vereign Being, and tempted to believe
the powers above either ſubject to the
ſame infirmities, that we are, or at
leaſt not much diſpleaſed with our ir-
regularities here below? He that
makes bold with falſe Gods, does ve-
ry eaſily ſlide into contempt of the
true; and while men are brought in
to dare the ſuppoſed Deities above,
they'll be more ready to affront him,

'that is *the same yesterday, to day, and fo*
'*ever.* Nor will it follow, becau
'Books that treat of Heathen Go
'may be read, that therefore thoſe De
'ties may be Acted, and mentioned o
'the Stage; for there is a great diff
'rence between reading a thing, an
'ſeeing it acted with all the vanit
'and boldneſs that uſually attends i
'In reading, a mans ſerious thoughts
'are not diſperſed or ſcattered, bu
'keep within the compaſs of modeſty
'and weigh things in the ballance o
'reaſon; whereas being Acted to th
'life, they naturally ſtrike vanity int
'the mind, affect the ſenſual part, driv
'away ſeriouſneſs, and leave an unha
'py tincture behind them.

'And if it be againſt the Divine Law
'familiarly to mention or talk of the
'fictitious Deities, it cannot be very a
'greeable to the ſenſe of it, for Chriſt
'ans to go and hear that idle talk; fo
'as in other concerns the receiver is a
'bad as the thief, ſo he that with deligh
'hears that which another is forbid
'ſpeak, makes himſelf acceſſory to h
'fi

'sin, and draws needless guilt upon his 'Soul.

'Flatter not your self, Sir, with a fancy, that these Plays are no where forbid in the Bible, and that therefore it 'may be lawful to see them, for the word κώμοι, *Revelling*, I mentioned before, and to which the Apostle threatens exclusion from the Kingdom of 'Heaven, *Gal.* 5. 21. and from which 'the word Comedy in all probability is 'derived, though I know others fetch 'it from κώμη, a village, because in ancient times, they did sing Songs about 'Country Towns, I say this word includes all such vain, lascivious, Ludicrous and Jocular representations, not 'only Dancing and luxurious Feasting, but wanton, light and amorous Interludes, and all 'that belongs to the pampering and satisfying of the Flesh, 'such as amorous Songs, Complementing of Mistresses, Love-tricks, and immodest parts and speeches, which 'make the vainer sort of the company merry,

Vid. Gerh. Joh. Voss. de Idol. l. 2. c. 8.

'merry, for the word is very compre
'hensive, and being so, one would think
'should fright every serious perso
'from coming within the guilt of that
'which hath so severe a threatning an-
'nex'd to it.

'And is it worth losing Heaven, and
'eternal happiness for the sight of such
'jocular Shews? Are the pleasures a-
'rising from hence, of that consequence,
'that they will counter-ballance so great
'a loss? Had you rather forfeit Gods
'favour, than these ludicrous transacti-
'ons? Are these momentary satisfacti-
'ons of that value, that you would run
'the hazard of being for ever deprived
'of the beatifick vision for them? That
'usual exception, that God will not be
'so cruel, as to condemn Men for such
'harmless sports, is of no weight at all;
'for God hath no where declared, that
'he will govern himself by Mens fan-
'cies; but his eternal wisdom is the
'rule he'll go by; if men will have
'their pleasures, he hath thought fit
'to forbid, they must thank themselves,
'if they go without his favour; and

since

since they were warned of this danger, they can have no excuse, but are as the Apostle speaks ἀυτοκατάκριτοι condemn'd of themselves, *Tit.* 3. 11.

'Let's but consider the Nature, scope and drift of our Religion; it commands us decency, modesty, sobriety, vigilancy, or watchfulness over our thoughts and words, and actions, simplicity in the inward and outward man, redeeming the time, employing the hours God hath lent us, in profitable discourses, and things useful and tending to edification. It bids us abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; it condemns all Rioting, chambering, wantonness, and making provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof: It commands us to walk after the Spirit, to be heavenly minded, to have the same mind and temper in us, which was also in Christ Jesus, to grow in grace, to advance in goodness, to grow strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; it bids us stand up for the glory of our God, and to be concern'd when his Name,

'or

'or Religion, or things Sacred are abu-
'bused; it bids us avoid Scandal, and
'take heed we do not by our example
'either draw people into errors, or
'confirm them in their sins; it bids us
'take heed of discouraging our neigh-
'bours from goodness, and of laying a
'stumbling-block in the way of weak-
'er Christians; it bids us exhort one
'another daily, and beware lest any
'of us be hardned through the deceit-
'fulness of sin; these are some of its
'principal rules, and I need not add,
'what our great Master hath told us,
'*ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I*
'*command you*, Joh. 15. 14. how these
'rules can be observed by persons that
'delight in these shews, I cannot ap-
'prehend; is it modesty to be a hear-
'er of that ribaldry and filthy commu-
'nication, which some Plays are stuffed
'with? Or to be a spectator of so ma-
'ny undecent and wanton gestures, po-
'stures and actions, which in some Co-
'*medies* make up the greatest part of
'the shew? Is this sobriety, to stand
'by and hear men curse and swear, and
'talk

talk of things which ſhould not be ſo much as named among Chriſtians? Is this decency to afford your preſence in a place, where the moſt debauched perſons aſſemble themſelves for ill ends and purpoſes? Is this your fear of God to go and hear the moſt ſolemn ordinances of God *railled*, and undervalued, ſuch as marriage, and living up to the ſtrict rules of reaſon and conſcience? Is this your watchfulneſs over your thoughts and words, and actions, to go and expoſe your ſelves to temptations, to run into the Devils arms, and give him an opportunity to incline your heart to ſinful delights, and being pleaſed with things which God abhors? Is this that Godly ſimplicity, the Goſpel preſſes, to pay for your being affected with the vain ſhews of this ſinful World, and to take liberty to hear and ſee, what men of little or no Religion ſhall think fit to repreſent to you? Is this redeeming of your time to throw away ſo many hours upon fooling, and ſeeing mens ridiculous poſtures, geſtures and behaviours? Is

'Is not this making war againſt your
'ſoul? Is not this fighting againſt your
'happineſs? Is this the way to grow
'in grace, and to advance in goodneſs
'and to abound more and more in the
'love of God, which your Chriſtianity
'ty obliges you to? Is not this to clog
'your ſoul? Is not this to throw impe-
'diments in her way to felicity? Is
'not this the way to make her ina-
'mour'd with the World, from which
'a Chriſtian is to run away, as much
'as he can? By your Saviours rule
'though you are in the World, yet you
'are not to be of the World; Theſe
'ſhews alienate other mens affections
'from the beſt of objects, and what ſe-
'curity have you, that they will not a-
'lienate yours? Or have you a peculiar
'exemption from that danger? If you
'have, ſhew us your warrant, let's ſee
'your patent; if you take the ſame
'way that profane perſons take, to dull
'their religious deſires, how can it be
'otherwiſe, but it will have the ſame
'effect in you? if you uſe the ſame
'means, why ſhould you not fear the

'ſame

same unhappy influence? Why should you shut your eyes against a thing as clear as the Sun? Do not you see, do not you perceive, how sin grows upon you by frequenting these places? Do not you find, how under these shews, the brutish part in you grows strong and vigorous, how the Flesh distends its plumes, grows easie and pleased, and in time engrosses all the nobler faculties of your Soul? As you are a Christian, you are to bring your Flesh into subjection, and to keep under your Body; and do not these shews signally help towards its power and dominion over the nobler part, and promote its Soveraignity, and triumph over the reasonable appetite? what pampers it more than such sights? What feeds its prepostrous longings more than these? Do not these evidently make this Slave usurp Authority over her Mistress? And is this fit to be done by Christians, who are to crucifie the Flesh with its lusts and affections?

'Who

'Who sees not, that these sights are 'meer incentives to lust, and fewel to 'feed the impurer fire in our breasts? 'And is this to walk after the Spirit, as 'we are commanded? If they that walk 'after the Flesh cannot please God, how 'can you hope to please him, while you 'allow your self in this work of the 'Flesh? Is this to promote a lively sense 'of God? Is the Stage likely to pro-'duce vigorous apprehensions of Gods 'grace and favour? you know it damps 'and obscures them, you know it is an 'Enemy to them, you know it is the 'worm that hinders you Spiritual 'growth, and yet will you fancy a ne-'cessity to frequent it? Men may count 'it necessary to be drunk, and to kill a 'person they do hate, but will this ne-'cessity hold water when the great 'Judge comes to examine it? The Flesh 'may count that necessary, which rea-'son apprehends to be absurd, and im-'pious, and he that hearkens to the 'dictates of the brute within him, will 'call any thing necessary, though ne-'ver so contradictory to the Oracles of 'Heaven

'Heaven, and the leſſons of our great 'Maſter Jeſus? Is this to have the ſame 'mind in you, which was alſo in Chriſt 'Jeſus? I hope you do not queſtion the 'duty, and if you believe it incum-'bent upon you, can you imagin, that 'in frequenting the Stage, you imi-'tate his example? Did he ever en-'courage ſuch empty things? Is there 'any thing in all the Hiſtory of his 'life, that may be ſaid to countenance 'ſuch doings? Could he applaud theſe 'follies, do you think, whoſe life was 'a perfect pattern of holineſs, nay, are 'not all his precepts levell'd againſt 'theſe ſcurrilities? Is it poſſible to live 'up to his precepts, and feed our eyes 'with theſe Shews? Is it poſſible to be 'his friend, and a friend to theſe vani-'ties? He whoſe life was a perpetual 'ſelfdenial in the pleaſures of this life, 'could he give the leaſt colour, or ſha-'dow of approbation of them? He who 'preached up the Doctrin of the Croſs, 'could he have any liking to that, 'which is directly contrary to that 'Doctrin? Would any man that looks

'upon the jolly aſſembly in a Play-
'houſe, think that theſe are Diſciples
'of the crucified God? Do they not
'look liker *Mahomet*'s Votaries, or
'*Epicurus* his Followers? Would not
'one think that they had never heard
'of the Croſs, and that whoever their
'Maſter was, they were diſciplined on-
'ly to live merrily? Would not one
'think that theſe perſons are very dif-
'ferent in their tempers from thoſe
'Chriſtians, the primitive Fathers do
'deſcribe, who trampled on the World,
'and were afraid of any thing that ſa-
'voured of its ſatisfactions? Would
'not one think, that they are rather
'diſciples of ſome Heathen, *Jupiter*, or
'*Venus*, or *Flora*, or ſome ſuch wanton
'Minion, than of the grave, the au-
'ſtere, and the ſerious *Jeſus*, for ſuch
'he would have his followers to be,
'theſe he would have tread in his ſteps;
'theſe he would have known by acti-
'ons, and a behaviour like his own,
'and is a Play likely to plant this no-
'ble temper in you? Is the ſight of a
'Comedy a probable means to make

'you

'you live above the World? are the 'profane *railleries* that are uſed there, 'fit preparatives for auſterity of con-'verſation? Is this the way to pro-'mote gravity, to viſit the Stage, 'where all gravity is look'd upon as 'Pedantry, and traduced as a thing 'proper only for old Uſurers, and Wo-'men who are paſt their ſins and vices? 'Is this the way to advance ſeriouſ-'neſs, to be much at places, where ſe-'rioufneſs is cenſured as a trick of Di-'vines, or at the beſt, as an effect of 'vapours, and the natural reſult of 'melancholy and the ſpleen? As a 'Chriſtian, you are to ſhun the very 'appearances of evil, and is this your 'obedience, to delight in that which is 'evil, to applaud it with your ſmiles, 'to commend it with your tongue, and 'to encourage it by your preſence?

'As a Chriſtian, you are the *Salt of* 'the Earth, and conſe-'quently are to preſerve *Matt.* 5. 13. 'your Neighbour from 'corruption; and is this the way to pre-'ſerve him from infection, by your pre-

'ſence in ſuch places, and being as vain 'as he, to encourage not only the actors 'in their unlawful profeſſion, but the 'ſpectators too in their diſobedience to 'the Goſpel? And what is this, but to 'make your ſelf a Proctor to ſin, to 'help people to be undone, to aſſiſt them 'in going to Hell, and to make your 'ſelf acceſſary to their folly?

'Are theſe the Chriſtians, that are 'to help one another to Heaven? Are 'theſe the Chriſtians, that are to go 'hand in hand together, to Gods ever-'laſting Kingdom? Are theſe the lights, 'the ſhining, the burning lights, that 'are to light the ignorant Brother to the 'inheritance of the Saints in light? Is 'not this to be blind to the great deſign 'of the Goſpel? And if the blind lead 'the blind, ſhall not they both fall into 'the pit?

'*Wo to that man by whom the offence* 'cometh; *it had been better for him, that* 'a Mill ſtone were hang'd about his neck, 'and he drown'd in the midſt of the Sea, 'ſaith our great Maſter, *Matth.* 18. 6. 'Does not this threatning fright you?

'Doth

'Doth this put no ſad thoughts into 'your mind? Do you believe he ſpoke 'true? And do not you think you are 'concern'd? What is your going to a 'Play-houſe, but giving Offence? 'What is it but hardning other men 'in their ſins? Is not this tempting 'young people to thoſe extravagancies 'they ſhould deteſt? Is not this juſti-'fying the Players profeſſion, and to 'make them think that you approve of 'their ludicrous vocations? Their pro-'feſſion is infamous by our Law, which 'looks upon them, as perſons of no ho-'neſt calling; and if you go to ſee 'their actings, and to ſee how they 'proſtitute themſelves, doth not this 'look like a commendation of their un-'dertakings? And have not you ſins 'enough of your own to anſwer for, 'but you muſt transfer other mens upon 'you too? Are you afraid, Gods an-'ger to you will not be great enough, 'except you add your Neighbours of-'fences, to make his wrath the hea-'vier? All thoſe perſons of your ac-'quaintance that go to a Play, becauſe

'you do, are all Scandalized by your ex-
'ample; and is not this putting a
'ſtumbling-block in your Neighbours
'way, eſpecially if people believe that
'you have ſome goodneſs in you, or
'have a name that you are Religious,
'how bold doth this make other per-
'ſons to venture on theſe vanities? And
'how dreadful muſt this make your
'account? Either you do not think
'much of another World, or if you do,
'you cannot but conclude, that theſe
'things will lie very heavy upon your
'conſcience one day? What if you do
'not think it to be ſin, will your think-
'ing ſo excuſe you? Willful ignorance
'is as bad as a known ſin, and how ea-
'ſily might you know ſuch doings to
'be ſinful? But being unwilling to be
'better informed, judge you, whether
'it will not agravate your Condemna-
'tion? how could the Primitive Chri-
'ſtians, know theſe things to be ſinful?
'And is it not poſſible for you to
'know it? They had the Bible; ſo have
'you: They had the ſame precepts
'that you have, only they did not read
'the

'the Scripture ſo ſuperficially, as per-
'haps you do, and that was the reaſon
'why they came to the knowledge of
'this ſin, while you halt betwixt two
'opinions; Their affections did not
'lean and bend ſo much to the
'the World as perhaps yours do, and
'therefore they might eaſily perceive
'*Chriſt's* and the *Apoſtles* meaning,
'while you, who dote too much upon
'theſe outward things, have a cloud
'or miſt before your eyes, that you
'cannot diſcern the ſenſe of the Holy
'Ghoſt.

'Your preſent divertiſements may
'hide the guilt from your ſight, but
'when the Summons of a terrible God
'to appear at his bar, ſhall rouze your
'Conſcience one day, you'll be of ano-
'ther mind.

'How? Did Chriſt come down from
'Heaven and die, and ſpill his blood
'for you, that you might ſecurely in-
'dulge your carnal Genius? Did he
'ſacrifice himſelf for you, that you
'might pleaſe your ſelf with ſuch foole-
'ries? Hath he appeaſed the Almigh-

'ties wrath for you, that you might 'ſpend your time in a Theatre? Is this 'a proper end of the mighty purchaſe 'he hath made? Did ſuch phantaſtick 'actions deſerve ſo great a condeſcen-'ſion? Is it likely that he would have 'aſtoniſh'd all the Angels of Heaven 'with his deſcent into this valley of 'tears, if this ſecurity in carnal ſatiſ-'factions had been his deſign? One 'would rather think, that ſo deep a hu-'miliation called for the greateſt ſeve-'rities, and was ſhewn on purpoſe to 'engage poor mortals to the profound-'eſt acknowledgments of his favour; 'One would think, that ſuch miracles 'of charity challenged a moſt ſerious 'behaviour, and that after this, men 'ſhould not dare to think of trivial and 'impertinent things; This is more 'likely to be the end of his Incarnation 'and Suffering, than the other. To de-'light in ſuch vanities is a diſparage-'ment to his love, a blemiſh to his cha-'rity, a diſgrace to his condeſcenſion, 'and an undervaluing of ſo great a 'mercy; And do you thus reward 'him?

'him? Do you thus requite his kind-'neſs? Is this the return you make him 'for his ſweat and agonies, for his 'ſighs and groans, for his pains and all 'his labours? Did he bleed, that you 'might grow ſtrong in ſin? Did he 'die, that you might cheriſh the luſts 'of the Fleſh? Did he make himſelf of 'no reputation, that you might pleaſe 'your ſelf with divertiſements, inven-'ted only to affront him, and to ren-'der his endeavours to convert our 'ſouls ineffectual.

'Have not you obſerved it? Have 'not you taken notice, how men and 'women, who have had ſome zeal for 'Religion, and very pious inclinations, 'how that zeal hath decreas'd upon 'their frequenting theſe Houſes, how 'their goodneſs hath decay'd, how flat 'they are grown in Devotion, how 'weak in their Holy Performances? 'how dull in the work of Meditation? 'how ſlovenly and ſuperficial in Gods 'ſervice? may be, they have kept up 'ſome outward ſhews, ſome external 'formality, ſome earneſtneſs for the

'fringes

'fringes of Religion, or for the ceremo-
'nial part of Christianity ; But have
'not you seen, how they are become
'strangers to that life, which must a-
'dorn it, to that contemplation of good
'things, they formerly delighted in, to
'that strictness they once professed?
'Have not you seen how they have re-
'mitted in their warmth, and how the
'holy fire that once burn'd in their
'breasts is gone out? And is your Chri-
'stianity so fierce and violent, that it
'needs a bridle? Is it so hot, that it
'must have an extinguisher? Is it so
'flaming that it wants this stolen water
'to quench it?

'With what face dare you approach
'the Table of your Lord, who have
'been a spectator of such shews but a
'little before? With what eyes can you
'appear in the presence of that King
'of Kings, who have but a little be-
'fore prostituted your Soul to the De-
'vil? With what conscience can you
'promise the Lord Jesus to follow him,
'when you intend to expose your self
'again to these temptations? Do not

'you

you bluſh to think, how you ſerve both God and *Mammon*, *Chriſt* and the World, contrary to your Redeemers proteſtation, that you cannot ſerve two Maſters? If you come to the Lords Table one day, and run to a Play-houſe another, do not you deſtroy all that you built the day before? 'If you come to the Supper of the Lord 'there to profeſs your ſorrow for loving 'the World; are you in good earneſt 'ſorry for it, or are you not? If not, 'why do you play the hypocrite, or 'do you think to put a cheat upon the 'Almighty, as if he did not ſee your 'heart, or would be taken with ſhew 'and pomp? If you are, how can you 'run into the ſame temptation again, 'or go to a place where you will infallibly be tempted to the love of the 'World? Is not this to ſhut the gates 'of mercy againſt you? Is not this to 'make your ſelf odious to that God 'whoſe favour you expect in the laſt 'day? Is not this to live in contradictions? In this Sacrament you profeſs 'to imitate your Lord in deſpiſing the World,

'World, and is this imitation, to go
'one day into the houſe of God, and
'the next into a den of Thieves; for
'ſo the Stage may juſtly be called,
'where men are robb'd of their relliſh
'of ſpiritual objects.

'Whence hath come that Atheiſm,
'that looſeneſs, that indifferency in
'things Divine, that low eſteem of the
'tremendous myſteries of Chriſtianity,
'which of late like a Land-flood hath
'over run us? Have they not deriv'd
'their boldneſs from theſe places? Have
'not the vices repreſented there in jeſt,
'been practiſed by the forward youth
'at home in good earneſt? And can a
'Chriſtian have a good opinion of theſe
'houſes, where ſo many have loſt their
'vertue? Can any man of reaſon think,
'that after all this miſchief, they may
'be ſafely hugg'd and applauded?
'Thoſe many notorious Fornications
'and Adulteries we have heard, and
'know of, thoſe bare-faced cheats,
'mens boaſtings of their ſins, and glo-
'rying in their ſhame, their impudence
'their courage to do evil, their daring

'to

to do things which ſober Heathens have deteſted, whence have they come in a great meaſure, but from theſe poiſon'd fountains? Why ſhould we be afraid to call a ſpade, a ſpade? Do not even wicked men confeſs ſo much, men who have been guilty of ſuch crimes? Shall men of no great ſenſe of Religion complain of it, and ſhall a Chriſtian do any thing, that may contribute toward the holding of them up?

'If wanton, luſtful, and obſcene jeſts are expreſly forbid by the great Apoſtle, nay, are not ſo much as to be named among Chriſtians, how can a man that makes profeſſion of that Religion, hear them, or be taken with them, when Gods name is profaned in ſuch houſes? when Religion is mock'd? when vertue is rendred odious? how can you hear it without reproving the men that do it? how can you have patience to let them talk at this rate? you are bound by your profeſſion to rebuke your neighbour for *Epheſ.* 5. 4.

'notorious

'notorious ſins, and not to ſuffer in-
'quity upon him; can you hear theſe
'things, and ſee men affront their Ma-
'ker, and be poſſeſs'd with a *dumb*
'*Devil?* How can you diſcharge your
'conſcience, to let your neighbour do
'evil without giving him an Item of
'Gods diſpleaſure? If we are to exhort
'one another to take heed, leſt any of
'us be harden'd through the deceitful-
'neſs of ſin, how can you ſee men har-
'den themſelves in their ſins on the
'Stage, without a fraternal admoniti-
'on? If you have no courage to admo-
'niſh them, what makes you appear
'there where you muſt be ſilent under
'the indignities offered to your Maſter?
'Had you a Friend whom you loved,
'and ſaw his concerns in danger, his
'reputation attack'd, his credit torn,
'his good name wounded, would not
'you ſtand up in his vindication?
'You own Chriſt for your Friend, and
'profeſs you love him, and can you ſee
'his laws trampled on, and his blood
'and wounds made a complement of
'Speech, and not be moved at it? or if

'you

you have ſome little regret upon your ſpirits, where is your tongue to ſpeak for your friend? Do you think ſuch men are like to be his favorites? and is not this to fall under the laſh of that threatning, *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my Goſpel, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father*; ſince you have not ſpirit enough to reprove ſuch ſinners, why do not you ſtay away? why do not you keep out of their company? you are obliged to do either one or the other, if you cheriſh any hopes of ſalvation; and ſince to reprove them you are aſhamed, ſtaying away muſt neceſſarily be your duty. Mar. 8. 38.

'Do you ever examine your ſelf at night about the actions of the day? and if you do, doth not your preſence at ſuch ſhews, and your being pleaſed with them, fly into your face? Do not you think, *what have I done to day? how did I ſpend my time, might not I have ſpent it better, than at a Play-houſe?*

'houſe? How many perſons have I har
'den'd, and confirm'd in their ſins by m
'example? How much lightneſs and va
'nity have I encouraged by my preſence?
'hath not ſuch a ſin been pleaſing to me?
'Have not I been delighted with ſeeing
'my neighbour abus'd? Have not I been
'tickled with mens ſpeaking ill of him?
'Had God ſtruck me dead in that place,
'how ſad would my condition have been?
'How many vain and fooliſh thoughts
'have theſe ſights ſent into my mind?

'If you examine your ſelf in this man-
'ner and find theſe effects, have not
'you reaſon to ask God forgiveneſs?
'and if you ask him forgiveneſs, how
'dare you run upon the ſame rock a-
'gain? will you ſin wilfully after this?
'will you ſin againſt your knowledge,
'will you do that again, which will re-
'quire a new repentance? what is this
'but a mock-repentance, to go on in a
'circle of confeſſing and ſinning, of ſin-
'ning and confeſſing?

'But I doubt, this ſelf-examination
'is a thing you do not trouble your
'head with, and you ſhun it, as men do

'their

'their Creditors that dun them; you 'are afraid it will fill your head with 'ſcruples, and therefore avoid it, as 'thoſe who are unwilling to look into 'their accounts, that they may not be 'ſurpriz'd with the ſum they owe; if 'viſiting the Stage makes you neglect 'this ſelf-examination, it makes you neg-'lect a known duty; and if ſo, it muſt 'be ſinful, and if ſinful, how dare you 'meddle with it?

'Do but take a view of the writings 'of the Primitive Fathers, and you'll 'find them unanimous in this aſſertion, 'that in our Baptiſm, when we re-'nounce the Devil and his works, and 'the pomp and glory of the World, we 'do particularly renounce Stage-Plays, 'and ſuch ludicrous repreſentations. 'They that lived neareſt to the Apoſto-'lical times, in all probability knew, 'what was meant by this renunciati-'on, and this they profeſs to be the 'ſenſe of it, this they aſſure us is meant 'by thoſe pomps and glories, and why 'ſhould we preſume to put a new 'ſenſe upon that vow? They received

'this interpretation from the Apoſtles, 'and propagated it to poſterity, and 'in this ſenſe we make the Abju- 'ration.

'*Sir*, Have you abjured theſe things 'in your Baptiſm, and dare you venture 'on them? Have you renounced them, 'and dare you fall in love with them? 'Have you proteſted in the preſence 'of God and Angels, that you will not 'meddle with them, and will you break 'your vow? Have you ſolemnly pro- 'feſſed before the Congregation, that 'you will not have any affection for 'them, and do you make nothing of 'perfidiouſneſs? *How dareſt thou O Chriſti-*

Salvian. de gubern. Dei. lib. 6. *'an, run into a Play- 'houſe after Baptiſm,* 'ſaith *Salvian*, when *thou haſt confeſſed 'thoſe very Plays to be the works of the 'Devil? Thou haſt renounced the Devil 'and theſe Stage-Plays, ſo that if thou 'willingly and wittingly frequenteſt them, 'it's evident that thou returneſt to the 'Devil too, for thou haſt renounced both, 'and haſt profeſſed both to be one, ſo that*

'*if*

'*if thou return to one, thou returneſt to*
'*both.*

'I know what is commonly objected,
'that the reaſon why the Fathers are
'ſo much againſt Chriſtians ſeeing of
'a Play, was, becauſe the heatheniſh
'idolatries were acted to the life upon
'the Stage, and that proſelytes might
'not be in danger of being enticed to
'idolatry, was the great motive, why
'they inveigh'd ſo much againſt ſights
'of that nature; but thoſe that uſe
'this plea, moſt certainly have not read
'the Fathers, or if they have read
'them, have not conſidered all their
'arguments; for to go no farther than
'*Tertullian*, after he had con-
'demn'd theſe ſights for the *Tertul.*
'idolatries committed on the *de ſpect.*
'Stage, he produces other
'reaſons for which they are utterly un-
'lawful; as 1. Becauſe the ſpirit of the
'Goſpel, is a ſpirit of gentleneſs, but
'the actors are forced to put them-
'ſelves into a poſture of wrath
'and anger, and fury, and c. 15.
'the ſpectators themſelves can-

'not behold them without being put
'into a paſſion.

'2. Becauſe vanity, which is
c. 15. 'proper to the Stage, is alto-
'gether foreign to Chriſtianity.
c. 15. '3. Becauſe we are not to con-
'ſent to peoples ſins. 4. Becauſe
c. 16. 'men are abuſed in theſe places,
'and neither Princes nor People
'ſpared, and this being unlawful elſe-
'where, muſt be unlawful too upon
'the Stage. 5. Becauſe all im-
c. 17. 'modeſty and ſcurrility is for-
'bid by the Law of the Goſpel,
'not only acting of it, but ſeeing and
'hearing it Acted. 6. Becauſe
c. 23. 'all Players are hypocrites,
'ſeem to be what they are not,
'and all hypocriſie is condemn'd by the
'Goſpel. 7. Becauſe the Act-
c. 23. 'ors very often belie their Sex,
'and put on womens apparel,
'which is forbid by the law of God.
'8. Becauſe theſe plays dull
c. 25. 'and damp devotion and ſe-
'rioufneſs, which is and ought
'to be the indeleble character of Chri-
'ſtians.

'ſtians. 9. Becauſe it is a di-
'ſparagement to God to lift c. 25.
'up thoſe hands to applaud a
'Player, which we uſe to lift up to
'the Throne of Grace. 10.
'Becauſe experience ſhews, c. 26.
'how the Devil hath ſometimes
'poſſeſs'd Chriſtians in a Play-houſe,
'and being afterwards caſt out, con-
'feſt, that he had reaſon to enter into
'them, becauſe he found them in his
'own place. 11. Becauſe no
'man can ſerve two Maſters, c. 26.
'God and the World, as thoſe
'Chriſtians pretend to do, that fre-
'quent both the Church and the Stage.
'12. Becauſe though ſome
'ſpeeches in a Play are witty c. 27.
'and ingenious, yet there is
'poiſon at the bottom, and vice is on-
'ly coloured, and gilded with fine
'language, and curious emblems, that
'it may go down more glib, and ruin
'the ſoul more artificially.

'Theſe are ſome of *Tertullians* Ar-
'guments, and he that ſhall attentive-
'ly conſider them, will eaſily find that

'they are not only applicable to such 'Comedies where idolatry is acted, 'but to those of this age, where scur-'rility, vanity and immodesty, and o-'ther vices are incouraged; and where-'as some pretended, that if they saw 'no Plays, they should want sport, 'and be without necessary recreation, 'the learned *Presbyter* doth very hand-'somly reply; *Why art thou so* c. 29. *'abominably ungrateful, to com-'plain of want of recreation, 'when God hath given thee such great va-'riety of pleasures? for what can be more 'pleasant, than to be reconciled to God 'the Father, and the knowledge of the 'truth, our deliverance from darkness 'and error, and a free pardon of all our 'sins? what greater pleasure can there be, 'than the loathing of carnal pleasure, con-'tempt of the World, true Christian li-'berty, a conscience void of offence, a 'spotless life, freedom from the fear of 'death, trampling on the Heathen Gods, 'expulsion of Devils, the gift of healing; 'prayer for illumination, and living to 'Gods glory? These are the pleasures,

'these

'*these are the Plays of Christians, holy, free and perpetual; in such things as these, fancy thou seest a Play; here see the course of the World, behold the gliding Time, view the distance betwixt this life and eternity, expect the consummation of all things, defend the Church, rouze thy self at Gods signal, listen to the Arch angels trumpet, glory in the* Martyrs *laurels; If learning and knowledge do delight thee, behold in the Scripture there are verses enough, witty sentences enough, songs enough, and voices enough; no fables of Poets, but solid truths; no sophistry, but majestick simplicity; wouldst thou see Gladiators and Wrestlers, here thou hast them, here thou mayst see lasciviousness overcome by chastity, perjury by faithfulness, cruelty by mercy, wantonness by modesty, and these are our Olympick games, in which he is Crown'd that strives for mastery; Dost thou love to see blood drawn in a publick shew? Behold thou hast the blood of* Jesus; *and what a noble sight will shortly appear to our eyes, even the coming of our glorious Lord, the exul-*

'*tation of Angels, the Resurrection of*
'*his holy ones, the stately Kingdom of*
'*believing Souls, and the sight of the new*
'Jerusalem! *There is another shew be-*
'*hind, even the last day of Judgment, a*
'*day unlook'd for, a day despised by fools,*
'*a day wherein the old world will be swal-*
'*lowed up of fire! How glorious a sight*
'*will that be, when I shall behold with a-*
'*stonishment and joy, so many Kings,*
'*whom their flatterers placed among the*
'*Stars, sighing in outward darkness with*
'Jupiter, *and their parasites? So many*
'*Persecutors of the Christian name melt-*
'*ing in insulting flames! So many Philo-*
'*sophers with their Disciples, who gave*
'*out, that God was careless of the af-*
'*fairs of this lower World, trembling be-*
'*fore Christ's Tribunal! At that time I*
'*shall know* Tragœdians *by their loud cry*
'*in misery,* Stage players *by their being*
'*tormented by fire more than other men,*
'*the* Charioteers *in the publick Games, by*
'*their being red upon a flaming wheel,*
'*and the* Mimick *by his being tossed in*
'*sheets of fire.* Thus far that excellent
'man, whom St. *Cyprian* exactly imi-
'tates.

'tates. And certainly he that hath 'the ſame ſenſe of Religion that he 'had, cannot but be of the ſame opini-'on. So that it is for want of ſearching, 'and diving into the Nature of Chriſti-'anity, and what is more, for want of 'feeling the power of Religion, that 'makes men ſpeak in vindication of 'Plays and Interludes.

'What a pitiful ſhift is it to ſay, that 'great good may be gained by them, 'when it is plain that the evil which 'enſues upon them, doth ſignally pre-'ponderate and out-weigh the pretend-'ed Benefit? What if a moral Saying, 'or a witty Sentence, or an ingenious 'Apothegm lie ſcattered here and there 'among the Rubbiſh, will that grain of 'goodneſs counter-ballance a whole ta-'lent of ill that's ſeen there, or got by 'ſeeing it? Some have been ſo vain, 'as to give out, that they may learn as 'much by a Play as by a Sermon; but 'not to mention, that ſuch perſons ſpi-'ritual Appetite is extreamly vitiated, 'while they continue in this Opinion, 'they'l never be much edified, either

'by

'by a Play or a Sermon; and till they
'have a nobler Opinion of Gods Ordi-
'nance, it's just with God to suffer the
'Devil to lead them captive at his will.
'And what are the mighty Advantages
'men get by the Representations of the
'Stage? May be they learn to Court a
'Mistress well, or the vanities they see
'there, serve them to maintain a loose
'Discourse, or it enables them to make
'the company merry; but are these
'things that tend to reformation of Life
'and Manners? Who ever learned to
'abandon a Sin he is addicted to, by
'seeing its punishment on the Stage?
'Or who ever thought himself obliged
'to practise that Virtue which he sees
'Acted on the *Theatre*, except it be, to
'resent an Affront that's offer'd him,
'and to know how to maintain the
'Punctilio's of Honour and Bravery?
'And are these Christian Virtues? Are
'these the Graces that must make us
'glorious in the sight of God? Such
'Arguments are signs of a desperate
'Cause, and tacit accusations of the
'illness of the thing, since the Aprons

'that

'that cover it are made of Fig-leaves.

'And what if ſome Plays be more 'innocent, and not ſo prophane as o-'thers; if I go to one, doth not my ex-'ample encourage men to go and ſee 'thoſe which are more looſe and wan-'ton? If I mean to diſcourage Sin in 'others by my Actions, I muſt not give 'them occaſion to do that which is evil: 'Senſual men diſtinguiſh not betwixt 'the more harmleſs and the more hurt-'ful; and if I encourage the one by my 'preſence, I encourage the other too; 'and if by my example I approve of the 'Players Profeſſion in one thing, I ap-'prove of it in another too, and harden 'them in their Folly; not to mention, 'that my ſeeing the more harmleſs, as 'I call them, will in time entice me to 'ſee the more prophane; for Sin is catch-'ing, and one Vanity draws on another, 'and from the leſſer we run to greater, 'and when the horror of Sin is once aba-'ted in our minds, the things which 'are moſt contrary to Chriſtianity, be-'gin to appear harmleſs, and thus the 'Soul glides inſenſibly into darkneſs and 'eternal miſery. 'That

'That which you use to pretend some 'times, that there are *Divines* of the 'Church of *England*, who approve of 'these Shews, hath nothing of validity 'in it; for suppose there were some 'who allow of these Vanities, doth it 'therefore follow, that the *Church* of '*England* doth encourage them? The 'Opinions of some Divines are not the 'Standard of our Church, nor are the 'private Sentiments of a few Men Pre-'scriptions for her to go by.

'The Church of *England* hath no 'where declared so much, and as long 'as the Church is silent, it's presump-'tion to interpret the fond opinions of 'some men, as her Rule and Doctrin. 'How can our Church countenance 'such things, that professes strict adhe-'rence to the Word of God, and looks 'upon the judgments of men, that are 'contrary to it, as *Heterodox* and *Er-'roneous*? At this rate you might as 'well argue, that because some Divines 'have been seen at a Play, that there-'fore they have encouragement from 'the Doctrin of our Church. The Do-

'ctrin

ſtrin of a Church is one thing, and the practice of ſome of her pretended members is another. The Churches caſe would be very hard, if ſhe were to anſwer for all the miſdemeanours of her ſeeming Votaries; and who knows not, how in all Churches the profeſſors generally deviate from the rules that are extant in their Books and Canons?

'But after all, it's worth enquiring, whether thoſe Divines you ſpeak of be of the graver, or the younger ſort; that ſome young men who want expe-rience, and perhaps a lively ſenſe of Religion, ſhould be taken with theſe ſhews, I do not wonder; but who takes a raw youth, and ſuch as think any thing great and good, that's wit-ty, and ſerves to tickle the fancy, who takes ſuch men for judges in an affair of this importance? As to the graver ſort, I doubt you'll find none, or but very few, that are favourers of theſe ſpectacles, or if they do declare at any time, that if Plays were redu-ced to their true *decorum*, they might

'be

'be inoffensive, from hence it will not 'follow, that they countenance the 'common *Tragedies* and *Comedies*, which 'so manifestly go beyond the limits of 'decency.

'And what if you do go but now and 'then, Doth your going but seldom ju-'stifie the action? All that this excuse 'will amount to, is only this, that you 'do not sin so often as other men; but 'doth this free you from the guilt, or 'make you innocent in the sight of 'God? How would you take it, if a 'man should give you a box on the ear 'but now and then? Or how would 'you resent it, to have your good name 'taken away by a person, not always, 'but whenever his humour prompts 'him? And from hence you may easily 'guess at the weakness of this excepti-'on, and if you have that mean opini-'on of God, that low esteem of his 'greatness, as to think, that to affront 'him but now and then can do no 'harm, you are unworthy to be his 'Disciple, and judge your self unwor-'thy of Eternal Life.

'But

'But I am forced to go, you ſay, my 'Superiours command me to wait upon 'them to a Play, and how can I refuſe 'it, except I will loſe their favour, and 'the Place I hold under them? And is 'this ſuch a Bug-bear to fright you 'from your duty? To whom have you 'greater obligations, to God or Man? 'If to God, why dare not you prefer 'his favour before the favour of Men, 'and be guided more by his Laws, than 'by the benevolence of duſt and aſhes? 'Have not you courage to make a vow, 'and when you are ſolicited by your 'Superiours to go, cannot you ſpeak 'out, and tell them, that you lie under 'the obligation of a vow not to go, and 'who will be ſo profane, as to deſire 'you to break it? Had you rather ſin 'than diſpleaſe Men, or is a poor Crea-'ture more terrible to you, than he who 'thunders in the Heavens? If you are 'perſwaded in your conſcience, that to 'be preſent at theſe ſhews is ſinful, 'ſhall a creatures ſmiles make you ven-'ture the diſpleaſure of the moſt High? 'And what if you loſe ſomething con-

'ſiderable

'siderable by pleasing God? Hath God
'no ways to make you amends for your
'losses? Hath he no Glory, no King-
'dom, no reward, no recompence to
'redintegrate your fortune? If you lose
'this World for his sake, is not the fe-
'licity of the next recompence enough?
'But why should you mistrust him even
'in this present life? He that made
'*Moses* after he had left the Court of
'*Egypt*, *General* of his own Army and
'advanced *Joseph*, who hated to be
'great and rich by sin, to be *Viceroy* of
'the *Realm*, and preserved *Daniel* in
'his grandeur for this reason, because
'he would not depart from his consci-
'enciousness; is his arm shortned or is
'his strength abated, that he can do
'nothing equivalent to all this? Are
'not the hearts of men in his hand, and
'doth not he turn them as streams of
'Water? How often doth he make it
'appear to the World, that where a
'mans ways please the Lord, he makes
'his very enemies to be at peace
'with him? Nay how often do these
'generous self-denials work by Gods
providence

'providence upon Superiours, and they 'that at firſt ſollicited a man to do that 'which was vain, and contrary to the 'Laws of Religion, when they ſee him 'reſolute in his conſcienciouſneſs, how 'often have they been perſwaded to re-'flect upon themſelves, at leaſt to have 'a better opinion of the perſon who 'fears God more than them?

'What you have often told me, that 'from this way of reaſoning it would 'follow, that it is unlawful to write or 'to read a Play, will deſerve ſome con-'ſideration: As for the writing of it, 'though Poetry be a thing lawful and 'commendable, and is ſufficiently war-'ranted by the writers of Divine Poems 'in Holy writ, yet that will not juſti-'fie all the ſubjects, Poets pitch upon, 'and a conſciencious man will take as 'much care, that the ſubject he writes 'of, be grave and ſerious, at leaſt inno-'cent, as he would do of his diſcourſe 'in common converſation.

'I do not doubt, but that writing 'things obſcene and filthy, and unde-'cent, and contrary to good manners,

'and whereby others may be ſcandaliz-
'ed, and either drawn into ſin, or har-
'den'd in it, is as bad as ſpeaking of
'them. Without all peradventure a
'man may be witty without being pro-
'fane, and exerciſe his fancy to the
'edification of readers, without launch-
'ing out into things, at which Nature
'and Religion teaches us to bluſh; and
'I need only put you in mind of what
'the incomparable Mr. *Cowley* ſaith, in
'his Preface to his works, ſpeaking of
'the admirable ſubjects that the Scrip-
'ture affords for the exerciſe of Wit and
'Poetry; *It is not without grief*, ſaith he,
'*and indignation, that I behold that Di-*
'*vine ſcience employing all her inexhauſti-*
'*ble riches of wit and eloquence, either in*
'*the wicked and beggarly flattery of great*
'*perſons, or the unmanly idolizing of*
'*fooliſh Women, or the wretched affecta-*
'*tion of ſcurril laughter, or at beſt*
'*on the confuſed and antiquated*
'*dreams of ſenſeleſs fables, and meta-*
'*morphoſes.*

'As for reading of modern Plays, he
'that conſiders what an averſion from
'ſeriouſ-

'ſerioufneſs, and better things, the 'reading of them cauſes in the younger 'ſort, will find no great reaſon to en-'courage them in ſuch trifles, but ra-'ther to diſſwade them all he can from 'ſtudies of this nature; and though I 'believe that a grave, ſerious man, 'whoſe ſenſes are throughly exerciſed 'to diſcern betwixt good and evil, may 'lawfully peruſe them, to ſee the hu-'mour of the Age, and to know how 'to obviate and confute the debauche-'ries, and errors which are growing, 'and tending to the ruin of good man-'ners, as skillful Phyſitians may med-'dle with poiſon, to make antidotes of 'it; yet to perſons whoſe underſtand-'ings are ſlippery and weak, whoſe 'paſſions are ſtronger than their reaſon, 'and who have already too great a 'tincture of ſenſuality, and conſequent-'ly may eaſily encreaſe the ill humour 'by ſuch divertiſements, they ought 'to be debarr'd from them by thoſe, who 'have the care of their education.

'These *Sir*, are my thoughts of the 'Query you propoſed to me, and tho' 'the Letter be ſomewhat long, yet I 'hope the arguments I have laid down, 'are not impertinent; That they are 'liable to exceptions, I queſtion not, 'being ſenſible that it's ealier to cavil, 'than to anſwer, and where men are 'reſolved to maintain the vain humour, 'they have imbibed from converſation, 'they will always have ſomething to 'ſay againſt the moſt ſober truths and 'aſſertions. The drift and deſign of 'the Goſpel is certainly on our ſide; 'if any be fond of preferring the di-'ctates of fleſh and blood, or the ſug-'geſtions of the world, before the mor-'tifying leſſons of our crucified Re-'deemer, all that we can ſay is this, 'that we would have healed *Babylon*, 'but ſhe would not be healed.

'I ſhall only add my wiſhes and 'prayers, that what you have read 'here, may be a means to bring you to 'a noble ſenſe of a better World, and 'convince you, that the way to attain 'a future bliſs, is very different from 'that,

'that, which leads to ſenſual delights
'and ſatisfactions: Our natures are ge-
'nerally too prone to gratifie the fleſh,
'and we had not need add fewel to the
'fire, but to do all we can to quench
'that, which is already kindled,
'that after our ſelf-denials here, we
'may reign with the ſelf-denying *Jeſus*,
'with whom we cannot live hereafter,
'except we ſuffer with him here, and
'endure the loſs of the pleaſures of ſin
'for a ſeaſon; nor ſit with him in his
'Throne, except we continue with
'him in his temptations here. And I
'am perſwaded, that did you live more
'in Heaven, and gave your ſelf time to
'meditate on the things which are not
'ſeen; Did you incorporate thoſe ever-
'laſting joys with your mind, and rivet-
'ed the belief of that endleſs bliſs into
'your very ſpirits, that your faith might
'be the ſubſtance of things unſeen, and
'the evidence of the treaſures hoped for,
'you would deſpiſe theſe ſhews and
'glories of the world, as much as you
'do value and eſteem them now, and
'would be ſo far from ſtopping your

'ears againſt the reaſons I have given, 'that you would ſtudy and invent more, 'to controll the vulgar errors of mankind.

'Get but once a true reliſh of ſpiritual things, and you will look be'tween anger and ſcorn on theſe 'trivial objects, admired by the vul'gar. And why ſhould not you 'raiſe your ſoul above the bubbles 'of external pomp? whatever diffi'culty there may be in the attempt, 'the fruit that grows on the Tree at 'laſt, will ſufficiently recompence 'your labour. Our Souls are active 'or unactive, according as we take 'pains with them, and though there 'be ſome irkſomneſs in ſwimming 'againſt the ſtream of carnal incli'nations, yet if the Hill be once 'conquered, the ſerene Air that is on 'the top of it, the gentle Gales, the 'glorious Sun-ſhine, the ſweetneſs of 'Reſt, that crowns all the Hardſhips, 'will make you bleſs the day that 'you begun to mind the things 'which belong unto your Peace. And

'that

'that you may do so, is the unfeigned
'Desire of,

SIR,

Your daily Orator at the

Throne of Mercy, &c.

And having hitherto discoursed of the Nature of sensual Delights and Recreations, and how far a Christian is bound to deny himself in them upon the account of a future Judgment; to compleat these Meditations, it will be necessary to draw some useful Inferences from the Premises.

INFERENCES.

1. *This clears what the Wise Man says*, Eccles. 7. 2. *That 'tis better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting.* So sad a Prospect, as that of a future Judgment is, one would think, were enough to hush all

Mirth and Jollity whatſoever; however, we may rationally conclude, that it's enough to turn the Byals, and make the Soul have leſs Affection for Mirth, than Sorrow and Severity of Behaviour. The antient Heathens make uſe of this Apologue; Sorrow and Mirth preſented themſelves one day before *Jupiter*, and deſired him to determine which of them two was beſt, and moſt to be choſen. *Sorrow* pleaded, That it made Men penſive and ſerious, cauſed them to think, brought them to a due Senſe of their own Frailty, and a profound Veneration of the Divine Majeſty, made them compaſſionate and tender-hearted, beſides many other Advantages the dull World took no notice of. *Mirth* on the other ſide alledged, that it cheer'd the Spirits, made them lively and fit for Service, enabled them to do great and noble Things, made Men good Company and belov'd of their Neighbours, beguil'd the tedious Hours of Humane Life, and was an Emblem of the Joys, the Gods themſelves were drunk withall. *Jupiter* having heard them

them plead a conſiderable time, and weigh'd the Reaſons on both ſides, found the deciſion of the Caſe ſo difficult, that he diſmiſt them without any other Anſwer but this, That he could not tell. But what a Heathen Oracle could not reſolve, a Chriſtian, guided by the Word of Life, may ſoon determine: and he that believes the tremendous things, the Scripture ſpeaks of, cannot but conclude, that there is leſs Danger in Seriouſneſs and Sorrow, than in Mirth and Jollity, becauſe there are fewer Temptations in the one than there are in the other. Our Natures certainly are not ſo prone to ſin in a Charnel Houſe as they are at a Theatre, nor our Affections ſo apt to run out into Licentiouſneſs in a Church, as they are at a publick Shew. And though a Man may be ſtrong, and couragious, and able to defie all Dangers, yet a *Sampſon* may be overcome by a *Dalilah*; and if he be not overcome, yet ſomething may ſtick by him, which may put an everlaſting ſtop to his Growth in Grace and Virtue.

He

He that goes much to the House of Mourning provides infinitely better for the Safety of his Soul than he that frequents the House of Mirth and Feasting; the former walks in a beaten Path whereas the other ventures over a narrow Bridge, or treads on the edge of a Wall, where it's possible he may come off with Safety; but for one that escapes without a Fall, there are twenty and forty that miscarry. He that presses through a Hedge of Thorns may possibly get through without tearing his Cloaths; but he that hath Patience till he comes to a Gate, and opens it, and so passes on, takes the surer way.

The wisest Men in all Ages have judged it better to converse with Spectacles of Misery, than with Objects savouring of external Splendour. He that visits a Hospital, where he beholds variety of distressed Creatures, some lame, some blind, some wounded, some deaf, some sick, some roaring under grievous Pains, will certainly go away more edified than he that feeds his

Eyes

ſyes with all the Gayeties of a luxuous Court; the former may leave ome kindly Impreſſions upon him, and blige him to admire the diſtinguiſhing Mercy, Goodneſs, and Compaſſion of God, who hath ſuffer'd no ſuch Accident to befall him, and ſeaſon his Heart with Pity and Compaſſion, with Tenderneſs and Charity; whereas the exceſs and extravagance of the other will, to what he can, leave a touch of Lightneſs and Vanity upon his Affections. That's the Reaſon why ſome provident Men heretofore, have carried their Winding-Sheets with them in their March, others digg'd their Sepulchres and Graves in their Gardens, others at their Solemn Feaſts have had a Death's-Head ſerved up, and placed upon the Table, others in a certain Room in their Houſe, have ſet an empty Coffin on purpoſe, that looking upon theſe Spectacles often, their Minds might be taken off from Admiration of worldly Satisfactions, and placed upon Objects which might furniſh them with more melancholick Contemplations: and this,

this, in all Probability, will be the effect of conversing with such Objects, if we view them, not as they belong to our Trade, but as thinking Men and Philosophers. The Sexton that digs his Neighbours Grave hath an Object serious enough before him ; but he goes to it as a Man that must maintain his Family with the Gain, and therefore is never the wiser for his Familiarity with such Spectacles. The Chyrurgion that goes among the Lame and Bruised, and Wounded, with no higher ends, than to fill his Purse, and to discharge the Office of his Art, will come home as little edified as he went: but he whose choice of such mortified Objects is voluntary and deliberate, attended with suitable Designs of meliorating and advancing the Mind, cannot but return enrich'd with that Wisdom, the Merchandise of which is more precious than that of Gold and Silver.

Whatever the merry Sinner may think, it's better to weep than to laugh. Our Great Master, the Lord Jesus, who is

is a good Christian's Pattern, was of this Opinion: and in Imitation of him, not a few eminent Saints have preferr'd a Feast of Tears before a Banquet of Mirth and sensual Pleasure: *Arsenius*, *Olympias*, *Domnina*, *Abraham* the Hermite, the solitary *Pambo*, and St. *Austin*, are famous in History for their Tears; to St. *Jerom* they were in the nature of daily Bread, and he professes, that when his Eyes were fullest of Tears, he saw the Quires of Angels, and could discern the Orders of *Seraphim* and *Cherubim*; such a Perspicuity of sight do Tears give to a Holy Soul. That which made these great Men weep so much, was either a Sense of their own and other mens Offences, or a lively Prospect of the Love of God, or a glorious foresight of the Joys above. But, worldly Sorrow is no Virtue; and he that weeps much, either because he cannot have those Conveniences he would have, or is cross'd and disappointed in his Designs, or because he hath lost such a great Man's Favour, or because some other Loss befalls him, weeps in vain, nay

sins

ſins by his weeping, and his Sin, if he continue impenitent, brings on Death. 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. Floods of Tears upon a mere temporal Account, are inſignificant in Heaven, and no more than Water ſpilt upon the Ground; ſuch Tears God doth not put into his Bottle, nor have the bleſſed Angels any Charge to number the drops that fall; but where Religion, and a mighty Senſe of God, and Tenderneſs of his Honour and Glory, cauſes Rivers of Tears, and where the Soul hath ſo delicate a Taſte that it cannot think of God without weeping, nor ſpeak of him without weeping, nor reflect upon his Goodneſs without weeping, there the Man is come up to a Perfection, which is the very Suburbs of Heaven.

It's true, all People cannot weep, nor are they therefore in a damnable Condition; for they may be ſincere in Goodneſs, and yet not be able to expreſs their Sincerity in Tears, though I am apt to believe, that it is for want of refining the Soul into a high Reliſh of Divine Objects, that puts a ſtop to theſe

ſacred

acred Floods in moſt Men; yet where hey can weep, and ſomething they ſee n God, or in the Word of God, or in he Providences of God, is the true Cauſe of thoſe Tears, every drop is icher than a Diamond, and ſuch a oul may vye Happineſs with the great-ſt Monarchs. They are ineſtimable reaſures; and though Man knows ot how to value them, yet the Spirits bove eſteem them at a mighty rate, nd magnifie them in Gods Preſence, *uke* 15. 10.

It's a huge Miſtake, that Men cannot ejoyce except they laugh; there are ears of Joy as well as Tears of Grief, nd the very Heathen ſaw, that true oy was a very ſerious thing. Hence was, that they confined true Joy to eir Philoſophers, and left the louder aughter to Slaves, and Carters, and loughmen: and how often have I en the richeſt Joys bubble forth from e largeſt Tears? Nor would Men in oſe Circumſtances change Conditi-n with the moſt potent Prince in the Vorld, ſuch Content, ſuch Satisfacti-

on,

on, such Riches, such Wealth, appears in these Tears which Religion forces.

How much better is it to be afflicted where our Prosperity and a good Conscience are inconsistent, than to enjoy Kingdoms and Principalities without the light of Gods Countenance? This was the excellent choice of *Moses*, and of all the Martyrs of old, who were content to be sawn asunder, to be stoned, to be tormented, to wander about in Caves and Dens, weeping and destitute, rather than defile their Souls with Sin; which puts me in mind of the good Advice St. *Jerom* gave to his Friend *Heliodorus*, *Did the Babe, thy Grand child*, saith he, *hang about thy Neck; should thy Mother that bare thee, bid thee look upon the Breasts thou hast sucked; should thine own Father lie prostrate at thy Feet, and intreat thee to spare thy self, and to forbear venturing on the Strictness and Severities of Religion; get away from them, my Friend, and with dry Eyes fly unto the Banner of* Christ Jesus: *in this case, to be cruel is the greatest*

Piety

Piety. This was the Case of the Primitive Believers, who preferred their Distresses before *Nero*'s Chair of State, and took greater Pleasure in their seemingly forlorn Condition, than *Claudius* or *Caligula* in their Affluence. In the midst of their Tears they were greater men than their Persecutors; and though they wanted all things, and their Enemies had all that Heart could wish, yet they justly believed themselves happier in their Funeral Dress, than the other in their Triumphs.

The Man that roars in a Tavern, or sings in an Ale-house, or rejoyces in his Sin, had more need to wish, that his head were water, and his eyes a Fountain of Tears; were he in his Wits he would do so: But his Reason is distorted, his Understanding darkned, his Eyes blinded, his Mind unhing'd, his Desires perverted, his Affections led astray, and like a distracted Creature, he rejoyces in his Nakedness.

Ah brutish and inconsiderate Soul! Thou weepest to see a Child or a near

Relation dye, and canſt thou ſee thy Soul die, and be robb'd of that Goodneſs which muſt give her Life, and be unconcerned? Thou weepeſt at the loſs of a thouſand Pounds, and canſt thou remember how thou loſeſt God's Favour, and all Right and Intereſt in the Merits of a crucified Saviour, and keep thine Eyes dry? Thou weepeſt to ſee a Friend drowning or burning in a mercileſs Fire, and canſt thou think how thou flingeſt thy ſelf into the Furnace of God's Wrath, makeſt his Anger kindle, and wax hot againſt thee, and doſt what thou canſt to turn it into a Fire, which no Man, no Angel can quench, and will no Tears flow into thine Eyes? How barbarous, how inhumane is thy Joy? What doſt thou rejoyce in? That Sin which makes thee merry, that Folly which chears thy Spirit, what is it but Ingratitude to thy kindeſt Benefactor? What is it but requiting the greateſt Good with the greateſt Evil? What is it, but contempt of him who keeps thy Soul in Life? What is it but bidding defiance

to

to him who carries thee on his Wings, and out-does the tenderneſs of a Mother, the care of a Father, and doth all that's fitting to guard thy Soul from Ruin? And are theſe fit things to rejoyce in? Are theſe fit Objects of thy Mirth? Are theſe Divertiſements proper for a Creature that holds his very Being of God, and is beholding to him for all the Bleſſings he enjoys? What wonder if after all this Impiety and Stubborneſs, God rejoyces too, rejoyces in thy Groans, rejoyces in thy Anguiſh, rejoyces in thy Agonies, rejoyces in thy Senſe of his Juſtice, rejoyces in thy Howlings? This he muſt do at laſt to ſecure his Honour. This he will be obliged to do in the end, to vindicate the Veracity of his Threatnings. This he will be conſtrained to do after all, that Devils may not mock his Holineſs, nor deride his Thunders, nor upbraid him with Partiality. At that time, this will appear very good Divinity, no Fable, no Romance, no Trade of Prieſts, no Invention of Politicians, no old Wifes Tale, no idle Story; and if thou could'ſt

exhauſt the Sea in that day, and weep it out again, to teſtifie thy unfeigned Sorrow, thou would'ſt do it.

Happy the Soul that thinks of this! Happy the Man that believes theſe Terrors before he feels them. How much wiſer are thoſe tender Hearts that do little elſe but weep and mourn, and make their Life a Valley of Tears without a Metaphor! whoſe Fear of offending God is ſo great, that every little Defect, and every accidental Miſcarriage, forces Tears from their Eyes: Though there may be ſome Indiſcretion in the Management of their Conſcientiouſneſs, yet notwithſtanding all this, their Tears are the Wine of Angels; theſe are the gaudy Dreſs of a holy Soul. The Almighty that ſees her adorned with theſe Pearls and gliſtering in theſe Pendants, falls on her Neck, and kiſſes her.

Fear not, ye afflicted, and toſs'd with Tempeſts: So the *Lord Jeſus* wept, though not for his own Sins, yet for the Sins of others, and was receiv'd into Glory; ſo *Mary Magdalen* wept, and

on

on thoſe Streams a gracious Pardon was convey'd into her Soul; ſo the great St. *Paul* wept, and found the Conſolations of Chriſt abounding in him; ſo the penitent *Publican* wept, and went juſtified to his Houſe. They that ſow in Tears ſhall reap in Joy. *Bleſſed are ye that weep now, for ye ſhall laugh, Luk.* 6. 21. There is a place high, wondrous high above, where all Tears ſhall be wiped away, and no Sorrow, no Grief, no Anguiſh ſhall appear; ſo we have heard, ſo we ſhall ſee e'er long in the City of our God: *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, That ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoyce, and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy. A Woman, when ſhe is in Travel, hath Sorrow, becauſe her Hour is come; but as ſoon as ſhe is deliver'd of the Child, ſhe remembers no more the Anguiſh, for Joy that a Man is born into the World. And ye now therefore have Sorrow, but I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoyce, and your Joy no Man takes from you,* Joh. 16. 20, 21, 22.

2. See here, *how differently ſpiritual things affect Men, as they either attentively*, or *inattentively think upon them.* The proceſs of the Day of Judgment to a Man that retires, and through Deſire, ſeparates himſelf to think of it, as the Covetous doth of his Gold, or as the Timorous doth of his Danger, *i. e.* in good earneſt, it will prove an invincible motive to ſelf-denial. Another, that looks upon it, as a thing ſpoke of in courſe every Lords day, thinks of the Words as he hears them, but ruminates not upon the Senſe, is no more moved with it, than the Carcaſſes that ſleep in their Graves, forbears not one Sin for it, but doth ſtill, as he uſed to do, mind his Body, gratifie his Fleſh, purſue his temporal Intereſt, comply with ſinful Men, pleaſe himſelf, regard Religion on the By, and ſet his Affections on things below. And as it is in this, ſo it is in other Truths; for, do but take a view of the Publick Aſſemblies; here the glad Tidings of God's Mercy to penitent Sinners ſhall make an humble Spirit weep, melt his Heart, and force him

him into humble Thoughts, and lively Admirations of God's Condeſcenſion; there ſits another, and either ſleeps all the while, or continues in as even a Temper as he came: What's the Reaſon? One weighs the Importance of this Truth, conſiders the vaſt diſtance betwixt God and ſinful Man, thinks, if theſe things be true, how marvellous God's Love muſt be; and that touches him to the Quick. The other's Thoughts are unſtable, as Water, uncertain and inconſtant: he ſatisfies himſelf with this, that he hath heard a Sermon, performed his Complement to God, and conſequently finds no Alteration in his inward Man.

How have I ſeen ſometimes a pious Soul tranſported with a lively Deſcription of the unſeen everlaſting Glory, while the greateſt part of the Congregation have been no more concerned at it, than if the *Orator* had ſpoke of common Trees, and Herbs, and the Hyſop on the Wall? the Reaſon is plain, The one thinks of it as a Believer, the other as an Infidel. The one reflects, Lord,

what am I, and what is my Father's houſe, that thou intendeſt to advance me to this Dignity, lift up a poor Worm from a Dunghil to a Throne, and place him with Princes, even with the Princes of thy People, the innumerable Company of Angels! The other pleaſes himſelf only with the Sound, mingles the Thoughts of the World with his Devotion, ſuffers not the glorious Object to lye long in his Mind, and ſo it paſſes, as it came, without any Impreſſion. Here one rejoyces at the precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, his very Heart leaps at the joyful News, and they come like Oyl into his Bones, warm his very Soul, and pierce even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit: there another ſits like a Stock, and wonders what ails his Neighbour to keep ſuch a ſtir about a few empty Words. But why ſhould'ſt thou wonder at the Change thou ſee'ſt in thy Friend? He thinks of the Veracity of God, and how theſe Promiſes will moſt certainly be fulfilled; he thinks, how the Riches God promiſes exceed all

the Treaſures of this preſent World, and what Satisfaction they afford to a hungry Soul, how far they do tranſcend theſe earthly Glories, and how to have a ſhare in them, is a far greater Priviledge than to be related to the greateſt Monarchs; and that raiſes his Soul into that ſecret Joy. Thou thinkeſt no more than a Lyon or Elephant, thinkeſt more of thy Profit and Gain, than of theſe intellectual Treaſures; thy Thoughts are not buſie about theſe Enjoyments; thou thinkeſt it time loſt to ſpend any ſerious Thoughts upon them, and how ſhould thy duller Soul be affected with them?

Here the Example of a valiant Saint, that fought with his Luſts, overcame his Deſires, ſtood ſtedfaſt in the hour of Temptation, conquer'd the Devil, vanquiſh'd all Oppoſitions, kept the Faith, finiſh'd his Courſe with joy, draws an attentive Soul into Imitation of his Virtues. There another that hears or reads the ſame Deſcription, feeds ſtill on his Husks, follows his careleſs Neighbour, delights in vain Company,

Company, continues in his Averſion from the ſtricter Lives of holy Men. The Reaſon is evident; for, the one thinks of the noble Attempts ſuch Souls have made, how they are applauded in Heaven, how they have ſignaliz'd their Valour, what Comforts they have prepared for, and of the Reward they now enjoy: the other looks upon them as melancholick Men, thinks of his preſent Pleaſure more than of a future Recompence, dives not into the nature of theſe Conqueſts, reflects not how agreeable they are to Reaſon, or how neceſſary in order to a Crown, but thinks he may have the Diadem ſpoken of with leſs Trouble, and therefore he ſits ſtill upon his Dunghil. Vain Sons of Men! How long will ye turn your Glory into Shame! Hath God beſtowed upon you a Faculty which Beaſts are Strangers to, and for which Devils envy you, even Reaſon and Underſtanding, the true Image of your Maker, and will you let it lie dormant in the Aſhes and Rubbiſh of your ſenſual Inclinations? When God hath diſtinguiſh'd

guiſh'd you from the ignobler Brutes, will you be like the Horſe and Mule, whoſe Mouths muſt be held with Bitt and Bridle?

Behold, the Almighty hath prepared a Supper for you; and when the Morning and Noon of your Life is ſpent, deſigns a Feaſt for you at Night, immediately after Death; a Feaſt, where the Lamb that was ſlain ſits Maſter, and intends to bid you welcome; a Feaſt, where the Meat will be Angels Food, the Wine Hallelujahs, and the Entertainment, Perfection of Bliſs and Glory; the Company, the Apoſtles of the Lamb, and the Spirits of Men made perfect; a Feaſt, where no Good will be abſent, and no Evil preſent, where Plenty and Affluence will laſt for ever, where Joys will abound, and the beatifick Preſence of God will charm and raviſh Souls to all Eternity. To this Feaſt he calls you, to this Banquet he invites you, to this Table he ſends for you, to theſe Dainties you are bid, to theſe Delicates you are entreated to come, of theſe Varieties you ſhall be made

made Partakers; and is it not worth conſidering, what this mighty Offer means? What if you ſee it not with mortal Eyes? your Thoughts may ſee it, your Underſtanding may behold it, your Reaſon may take a view of it. Your Thoughts will tell you, that God, who cannot lye, hath promiſed it, the Son of God, who is Truth it ſelf, hath revealed it; the Apoſtles, who came attended with the Power of Miracles, have publiſh'd it. Theſe will tell you, that there can be no doubt of it, and that it is as certain, as if you were actually Sharers of it. Give but your Underſtanding leave to ſearch into this Myſtery, and you will be charmed with it; give but your Reaſon leave to aſcend and deſcend upon the Ladder of the Word of God, and you will feel a Hunger and Thirſt after it; your Souls will long for it, your Affections will breath after it, and your inward and outward Man will labour after it, and ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; and ſhall all theſe Riches be loſt upon you for want of Thinking and Contemplation?

tion? Could you by thinking make those Joys visible to you, and will ye refuse it! Could you by meditating make that Glory present to you, and will you neglect the Opportunity? Could you by musing and pondering bring Heaven into your Chambers and Closets, and will ye debarr your selves of that glorious Sight?

See what you lose by your Inconsiderateness! See what Consolations, what Satisfactions, what Cordials, you deprive your immortal Souls of! Can you see other Men run away with all the Comforts of the Gospel, and remain senseless? Can you see others get into the Pool of *Bethesda* before you, and recover, and are you fond of continuing lame, and blind, and poor, and miserable? Can you see others carry away the Crown, and feel no Ambition in you? Can you see others take away the Blessing of your Father from you, and be unmoved at the want of it? Can you see how other Men by thinking arrive to Perfection, and will you

lye

lye groveling in the Duſt? O! think while thinking may do you good. In Hell you'll think, but it will be too late; there you'll think, but your Thoughts will be your Torment? there your Thoughts will be the undoing of you; there you'll think what happy Perſons you might have been if you had imitated *Abraham*'s Faith, and *Moſes*'s Reſolution, *David*'s Candour, and *Joſiah*'s Piety, St. *Paul*'s Courage, and St. *Peter*'s Tears, St. *John*'s Love, and *Lydia*'s Attentiveneſs, the *Berrhœans* Zeal, and the *Macedonian Churches* Charity, *Zachæus* his Reſtitution, and the *Publican*'s Repentance; but theſe Thoughts will then be your Vexation, ſince the working time is paſt, and the day of Vengeance come. There you'll think that Chriſt was your Friend, indeed, when he made himſelf of no Reputation, but took upon him the form of a Servant, became obedient to the Croſs, and dyed for you; but to think that he is your Enemy now, becauſe you refuſed Obedience to him, becauſe you made light of his Offers, and would

would not accept of him for your Governour, muſt needs fill you with endleſs Grief, and bitterneſs of Spirit. *Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver*, Pſal. 50. 22.

3. And *is not the greateſt part of the World to be pityed, that can delight in nothing but what they can graſp and feel?* The Covetous can delight in nothing but in Gold: If he want Money all his Joy is gone: If his Coffers be full, and his Barns ſtock'd with Corn, and Plenty doth ſurround him, his Heart rejoyces, his Soul triumphs, and Cheerfulneſs plumps his Cheeks; but without this, his Mind is diſturbed, his Faculties languiſh, his Countenance is dejected, and he looks like a dying Man. Who would imagine, that this Man hath a rational Soul? Who would think, he were created after the Image of God? Who would conclude him to have lived in a Land where the Goſpel is preach'd? Who can inferr from his Actions, or Behaviour, that this Man believes a Word of Scripture? Who would

would take the Wretch for a Disciple of the poor and afflicted Jesus? Who that looks upon him, would not be apt to cry with him, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis*, Let me die the Death of some brave self-denying Heathen Philosopher? For these certainly are in a likelier way of Salvation, at least of escaping the Wrath to come, than the covetous Christian.

Diogenes being desired of *Alexander* the Great to beg either Gold or Silver of him, received this Answer, Do but stand out of the Sun, and do not hinder that glorious Light from shining upon me, and I have enough. The brave *Crates* having sold what he had, and turned it into Money, generously threw it all into the Sea, saying, It is far better, I should drown thee, than that thou should'st drown me in Perdition. *Alexander* having sent to the great *Phocion* two Talents of Gold, the wise Man ask'd the Messengers, Seeing there were so many good Men at *Athens*, why the King should of all Men make choice of him, to present him? The Ambassa-

dours

dours anſwer'd, becauſe of all Men he look'd upon him as the honeſteſt. Say you ſo? replyed the Philoſopher, Then let *Alexander* give me leave to be ſtill an honeſt Man, which I can be without all theſe Preſents, and gliſtering Treaſures.

Cimon had two large Cups ſent him from a *Perſian* King, the one full of Gold, the other of Silver. He looks upon them ſmilingly; and asks the Man who brought them, Whether his Maſter intended, that *Cimon* ſhould be his Friend or his Servant? The man replied, It was out of Ambition to have him for his Friend, that he ſent it. Oh! then ſaith he, take them back again, for being his Friend, when I have need of them, I can ſend for them at any time.

Epaminondas, when ſome came to corrupt him with gifts, invites the *Ambaſſadours* to Dinner, and there entertains them with Roots, and Herbs, and with ſmall ſour Wine. Dinner being done, Go home, ſaith he, and tell your Prince, that *Epaminondas* being content

with such a Dinner, is not easily to be drawn by Bribes into a base and trayterous Action.

Fabritius, the *Roman* General, having concluded a Peace with the *Samnites*, the Magistrates of the *Samnites*, by way of Gratitude send six Ambassadours to him with vast Sums of Money, begging of him to accept of it; but he stroaking his Head, and Face, and Breast, and Knees, Gentlemen, saith he, while I can command these Limbs I have no need of Money; and so dismissed them. *Curius* gave the same Answer to them, adding, that he had rather rule over Persons, that had Money, than be possess'd of Money himself.

These Men were Heathens, whose Delight in Virtue drown'd their Delight in these outward Comforts. They saw, what an Impediment to Goodness, these Heaps of Silver were, and therefore scorn'd to delight in a thing so base and trivial; they were sensible, that the Soul had her Riches as well as the Body, & as the former by the Confession

of

of the wiſer ſort of Mankind, went beyond the other in value, ſo it was reaſonable they ſhould delight in the one more than in the other. Theſe Men were better Chriſtians by the Light of Nature, than thouſands among us are with all the helps that Revelation and Grace affords; not that the Fault lies in the means, which are larger and richer than *Pagans* and *Infidels* have, but that men ſtupifie their Souls more under theſe Advantages, than Heathens did under the leſſer Irradiations of the Divine Light and Splendour.

So then the very Heathens ſaw, that the more ſpiritual the Delight was, the nobler it was, and the more it was refin'd, and purified from the Droſs of the World, the more rational it was, and therefore more amiable, and fitter to be embraced: and ſure, God muſt have provided but very ill for Mankind, when he embued and impregnated their Souls with a Senſe of Religion, if he had not put ſomething into Religion, that's charming and lovely, whereby their Souls might be attracted

to delight in it. Religion being derived from him, who is the Fountain of Delight and Satisfaction, muſt neceſſarily have that in it which may make humane Souls rejoyce, and exalt their Delight into a victorious Supremacy above all worldly Pleaſures.

What did the Lord Jeſus delight in, who lived upon Alms? What did the Apoſtles delight in, who were in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Neceſſities and Diſtreſſes, in Stripes, in Impriſonments, in toſſings to and fro, in Labours, in Watchings, in Faſtings? What did all the Primitive Believers delight in, that were poor, and naked, driven into Exile, baniſh'd, forced to work in Mines, chaſed away from the Comforts of Wife, Children, and Relations? Something certainly they delighted in; for humane Nature cannot well ſubſiſt without delight in ſomething. It could not be the Riches of this World, for they had them not; nor indeed did they care for them, when they

2 *Cor.* 6. 4, 5.

they were offered them: it was Religion, that engroſſed their Delight. This made them joyful in all Conditions; this raiſed their drooping Spirits under the Rage of their Perſecutors; and certainly it would be hard, if a glorious God, with all his Attributes, and the wonderful things he hath revealed to our Comfort, were improper Objects of Delight: and ſince theſe are the genuine Delights of a Chriſtian, O beſotted Soul, why doſt thou delight in broken Ciſterns, when thou haſt the Fountain of living Waters to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in *Apes* and *Peacocks*, when thou haſt the Creator of all theſe to rejoyce in? Why doſt thou delight in a morſel of Meat, when thou haſt the Birth-right of eternal Glory to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in the ſhade of the Bramble, when thou haſt the ſhadow of God's Wings to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in the nether Springs, when thou haſt the upper Springs of Mercy to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in Houſes, when thou haſt a Houſe made without

out Hands to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in the Rivers of *Damaſcus*, when thou haſt the River of God's Pleaſure to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in a fading Beauty, when thou haſt him that's altogether lovely to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in the Voice of a deceitful *Siren*, when thou haſt him whoſe Voice comforts the Mourners of *Sion* to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in the Slavery of thy Luſts, when thou haſt him, whoſe Service is perfect Freedom to delight in? Why doſt thou delight in a little Gain, in Drops of Happineſs, in Crumbs of Bliſs, in ſhining Duſt, when thou haſt a Sea of Glory to delight in?

How deep muſt thy Soul lye immerſt in Body, if ſuch illuſtrious Objects cannot delight it! How far muſt thou be yet from the Kingdom of Heaven, if things of this nature cannot content thee! How earthly muſt thy Heart be, how debauch'd, how perverted from the end of its Creation, if theſe ſpiritual Delights are inſipid to it!

There

There are ſome among us I believe, who have taſted of both Delights, the ſinful ones of the Fleſh, and thoſe which are proper for holy Souls; tell me, I beſeech you, whether you think a Fit of Laughter, or a drunken Bout, or a merry Meeting, you once delighted in, ſo ſweet, ſo comfortable, ſo refreſhing, as the gentle, and ſoft, and kinder Influences of God's Spirit, when you have been engaged in Prayer, and Praiſes, and Contemplations of a future State? When you have been wreſtling with God, and after that work of Love have felt a holy aſſurance of God's Favour upon your Spirits, can any thing be more pleaſing, or charming, than thoſe divine Communications? When you have entred into Meditation of God's goodneſs, and the Love of God hath ſhined bright upon your Souls, have not you felt that, which hath been as much beyond all ſenſual Delights as an oriental Pearl is beyond Braſs or Copper, or ſuch baſer Minerals? Have not you found a Joy ſtealing upon your Souls after ſuch refreſhing Conſiderati-

ons, as hath tranſported you even into love of Martyrdom? How contented have you been after ſuch Exerciſes, or after ſome ſignal Self-denial? How harmonious have your Spirits and Affections been after ſuch Enjoyments of God's loving Kindneſs, and how like ſoft and curious Muſick have theſe Gales of the Divine Goodneſs compoſed your troubled Thoughts, and huſh'd them into a laſting Peace! And is not this infinitely better, than the Pleaſures of *Sardanapalus*, of *Dives*, and other luxurious men? Will not this turn to better account at laſt than fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul? Look upon *Heliogabalus*, who tryed how great a Monſter a man could make himſelf; in his Cloaths you ſhould ſee nothing but Gold and Purple, his Beds were embroidered, and the Feathers that were in them muſt be the ſofter Feathers of Partridges taken from under their Wings, mix'd with the fineſt Rabbets hair. He would ride in a Chariot ſhining with Rubies and Diamonds, and not only in the out-ſide of his Shooes, but

even

even within, he would have precious Stones: he would not ride abroad under ſix hundred Coaches with him; his Beds and Rooms were ſtrow'd with all ſorts of curious Flowers, and an everlaſting Perfume filled his Halls and Parlors: ſometimes in a Frolick he would be drawn in a Chariot by four Maſtiff Dogs, ſometimes by four Stags, ſometimes by four Tygers as *Bacchus*, ſometimes by four Lions, as *Cybele*, ſometimes by four beautiful Women. Now and then he would cauſe Ships to be richly laden with all coſtly Commodities, and then ſink them in the Sea. At ſome of his Meals he would have ſix hundred Eſtriches Heads at the Table; And when the Humour took him, all his Courſes ſhould be nothing but Pheaſants heaped and piled together in Diſhes, ſometimes they ſhould all be Pullets; ſometimes nothing would ſerve him, but to have all ſorts of deformed men at his Table, eight lame Men, eight blind, eight Blacks, eight gouty, eight fat, eight bald, eight deaf. In ſuch Fooleries he delighted; and becauſe

cauſe the *Syrian* Prieſts had told him, that he would die an unnatural Death, he would keep Poiſon in golden Veſſels, to kill himſelf, before any Perſon ſhould be able to lay hold on him: to this purpoſe, he would have ſilken Halters about him, and Penknifes ſet with Diamonds to diſpatch himſelf, when he ſhould ſee occaſion. And he built alſo a Tower, which he over-laid with Gold, that in Caſe of any ſudden Attack, he might throw himſelf from the top of it. Theſe were the ſottiſh Delights of this man, and yet after all, he died in a Jakes.

I have mention'd this Brute, and his Actions, becauſe there are in his ſhort Life all the extravagant Actions that a diſtemper'd Brain can invent, and all the Delights that a mad man could think of, yet who would not prefer a Delight in a good Conſcience, and delight in God's Worſhip, and delight in Acts of Charity, and delight in heavenly Thoughts before it? Senſual Delights muſt at laſt expire, but ſpiritual Delights do not die; but as you have ſeen

thoſe

thoſe vaſt Balls of burniſh'd Braſs on Church-Steeples caſt a glorious luſtre aſſoon as the Sun ſhines upon them, ſo at a ſerious man's Death, his delight in Holineſs, upon God's favourable Acceptance of it, inſtead of expiring and decaying, immediately grows bigger in its Glory, the Rays of it ſpread, and enlarge their Borders, and ſtretch themſelves into Eternity. And therefore,

4. *Who can harbour any hard Thoughts of Religion, becauſe it debars us of diſorderly ſenſual Delights?* In doing ſo, it does us a kindneſs, is our Friend, prevents our Danger, ſaves us from the Pit, delivers us from Hell, makes us live like Men. It doth not debar us of that which will make us happy, nor hinder us from ſolid Joy, nor deprive us of ſuch ſenſual Delights, as are neceſſary for our Preſervation. The Delights it keeps us from, are fitter for Swine than for rational Creatures: it ſeparates us from delights, which will lead the Soul into the Shadow and Valley of Death, from Delights, which dethrone

dethrone the ruling part in us, make the Maſter ſerve the Man, and from Princes debaſe us to a ſtate of Thraldom. It denies us ſuch delights as make God our Enemy, move him to depart from us, and provoke him to Indignation. It will not ſuffer us to meddle with Delights, which deſtroy the Glory of the Mind, damp our Zeal, alienate the Heart from God, and drive away his holy Spirit from us. It is againſt all ſuch delights as would make us miſerable, and enamoured with Sin, and the World, and in being an Enemy to ſuch Delights it conſults our good. It is more favourable to us than we are to our ſelves, and ſeeks to make us like God.

God is above all ſenſual Delights, he is not taken with the Beauty of the Face in Man or Woman; he undervalues a great Table, and hates the Prodigality of the Spend thrift; he hath no Body to pleaſe, no Eyes to ſatisfie with glittering Objects, no Ears to delight with artificial Sounds, no Blood to cheriſh with ſtudied Cordials; and though

though the World be his, and the fullneſs thereof, yet he ſolaces not himſelf in the Pleaſures of it; his Delights are great, like himſelf; ſpiritual like his Eſſence, infinite as his Glory, eternal as his Being; he delights in himſelf, and is to himſelf the Object of his Pleaſure: he delights in the eternal brightneſs of his own Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon: he delights in his own boundleſs Underſtanding, whereby he knows all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, and ſees all Beings before they are, and what will come to paſs, and dives into their nature, ends, deſigns, and the Accidents that befall them: his delight lies in doing good, and communicating the Rays of his Holineſs to his Subjects. He delights in his own Perfections, and Virtue is the amiable Spectacle of his Eyes: he delights in a Soul that loves him, and an humble Heart is to him a glorious ſight. The Soul that loves her own Lowlineſs, and is content to be little, and deſpiſed in the World, embraces Contempt and Reproaches, and like

like the mighty *Jesus*, runs with Patience the Race, that's set before her; this causes Joy in Heaven.

To this likeness, Religion would advance the Soul; not that it attempts to give it the same Perfection, but that it designs to work some Resemblance betwixt her, and that Sovereign Being. The Soul being in some measure capable of this Delight, its Endeavour is to bring her to a sense of it. In a word, it seeks to reduce Man to the first state of Innocence, from which by Sin he fell. And though *Adam* had all the Riches and Glories of the World concentred in his Paradise, yet his Delights were more spiritual than sensual, since his Joys were not so much from the Flowers, and Trees, and Animals themselves, as from the Excellency, Power, Wisdom, Greatness of God, which gliftered in their Make, and Use, and the Ends, for which they were created. He saw indeed the *proud Tulip*, the fragrant Rose, the odoriferous Jessamin, and rejoyced; he beheld the Cherry, the Fig, the Almond, and the Apple,

Apple, and triumph'd; he caſt his Eyes on the laden Trees, and how they ſeemed to let down their Arms to put their richer fruits into his Mouth, and was glad; he took a view of the Fiſhes, that danced, and leap'd in the Chryſtal Rivers, that water'd the glorious place, and his Spirits were enliven'd; but at the ſame time, the Bounty, Liberality, and Omnipotence of the great Architect of all, appeared ſo lively to his Mind, that he made his Garden a true Emblem of Heaven, fell down, and Day and Night ſung the Praiſes of his Creator, as if he vyed with the Angels of the upper World, and were trying, who ſhould hold out longeſt at melodious Hallelujahs.

This Kindneſs Religion intends to our Souls, and therefore ſuggeſts unto us the Promiſes and Threatnings of God, to keep our Feet ſteddy in the way, they are to walk in: to this purpoſe it tells us, That he who loves ſenſual Pleaſure ſhall be a poor man, poor in Grace, poor in gifts of God's holy Spirit, poor with Reſpect to God's Favour, poor even to contempt,

contempt, deſtitute of thoſe richer incomes, which ſanctified Souls receive, deprived of the Juice and Sap, which flows from the flouriſhing Vine, the Lord *Jeſus*, in want of a fore-taſte of Heaven, and of a ſenſe, What *the hope of God's calling is, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance is in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his Power toward them that believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right Hand in heavenly places*, *Eph.* 1. 18, 19, 20. Who can grumble at Religion after all theſe advantages? Who can find fault with it after this proſpect of its benefits? Who dares aſperſe that beauteous Virgin after ſuch Fruits it bears? Who would not eſteem it? Who would not prize it? Who would not honour it? Who would not ſpeak well of it? Who would not look upon it as a horn of plenty, and a treaſury of the greateſt comforts? Who would not maintain the honour of it, againſt all opponents?

Who

who would not vindicate it, when it is abuſed? Who would not riſe up in defence of it, when blaſphemous Tongues would traduce, and revile it? Let no man ſay here, I can follow my Carnal pleaſures, and yet be religious too; Alas! What Piety can that be, where thy Affections are divided betwixt Religion, and Worldly Pleaſures, and where theſe Delights commonly have the greater ſhare? May be thou ſayeſt thy Prayers, ſo have I ſeen Parrets, and Magpies repeat a few Sentences, which they have been taught: May be, thou goeſt to Church; ſo have I ſeen a blind man ſit down by a Candle, but to no purpoſe: Thou mayeſt attempt to reconcile the Temple of God, and Idols, but theſe attempts are as vain, as thy pleaſures are; while theſe ſenſual delights ingroſs thy Mind, the Word muſt needs be a dead Letter to thee: Heaven cannot ſupple thy Soul, Hell cannot fright it; the Thunders of God are inſignificant to it, and thou art unfit to dye, unfit to appear at the great Tribunal.

The Heathens tell this Fable, That *Ceres* coming down from Heaven one day, gave out, that she was a Nurse; whereupon, King *Eleusius* took her to attend his Son *Triptolemus*, and having him under her Tuition, in the day time she fed him with celestial Milk, and in the night she cover'd him with Fire, to give him Immortality. Religion is that Fire, which must make you immortal; this purges away your dross, and cleanseth you Hearts from the dregs of Sin and Death, makes you bright and shining, and capable of eternal Light. No Nurse is so tender of you as Religion is: it feeds you with celestial Milk that you may be strong in the Lord, and able to put on the whole Armour of God, and grow up into a perfect Man in Christ: what? if it will not suffer you to please your Flesh beyond what is necessary for it's Subsistence, must it therefore be your Enemy? Will you count it a Foe because it denies you the Sword which would kill you? How lovely should this very thing make it in your Eyes! How dear

should

ſhould this make its holy Precepts to you! How ſhould you rejoyce, that you have ſuch a Monitor to prevent your Ruine! What Praiſes do you owe to God, that withholds you from that which would precipitate your Souls into the gulf of Perdition! I conclude the Inference with this Story: Two Brethren were travelling, one a very prudent Man, the other rude and ſilly; coming to a place where two Ways met, they diſpute, which of the two they ſhould take; one look'd as if great Art had been beſtow'd upon it, Flowers grew on both ſides, and it ſeemed to be moſt frequented; the other look'd rough and uneven, liker a Foot-path than a High-way: the weaker Brother, charmed with the out-ſide, was clearly for making choice of the former; but the wiſer, though he ſaw that the pleaſant way invited the Eye, yet I fear, ſaith he, it will not bring us to a commodious Lodging, the rather becauſe I have heard, that the leſs beaten Path leads to an Inn, where we may have excellent Accomodation. The fooliſh Fellow was peremptory in

it, that the moſt pleaſant way muſt be the right way; and prevails with the Brother to bear him Company: and being advanced conſiderably in it, they light upon a Company of Robbers, who immediately clap Shackles on their hands and feet, and hale them both to their Captain and Governour. Here one Brother accuſes the other; the wiſer charges the other with Stubbornneſs; the weaker blamed the other's Facility, and alledged, That ſince his Brother pretended to greater Wiſdom than he, he ſhould not have been perſwaded. In fine, both are found guilty, and both laid up in Priſon. Theſe two Brethren are your Souls and Bodies: your Soul is the wiſe, your Body the fooliſh Brother. Let not your Body by its Importunity prevail with the Soul to conſent to its Deſires and Fondneſſes of the dangerous Delights of the World. O! hearken not to the Perſwaſions of a ſenſual Appetite, that chooſes a preſent Satisfaction, but conſiders not, there are Robbers at the end of the way, which will certainly

certainly throw both into outward Darkneſs.

5. *The great Day is at Hand, let's prepare for it.* So Chriſt told his Diſciples, and ſo the Apoſtles taught the Chriſtian World; nor muſt we wonder, that the *Bleſſed Jeſus* ſhould fright his Followers with the Approaches of that day, when he knew, it would not come in ſixteen hundred Years, and more, which are paſt, ſince his appearing in the World. I omit here the Calculations of curious Men, who have been bold to determine the Year in which the day of Judgment will happen; ſome that follow the Tradition of *Elias* have allow'd two thouſand Years to the Oeconomy before the Law, two thouſand to that under the Law, and two thouſand to that under the Goſpel, and after this have placed the Succeſſion of that tremendous day. But I doubt that this is rather a Jewiſh Criticiſm than a real Prophecy: for, God having created the World in ſix days, and a Thouſand Years being as one Day with the Lord, it's like Men have

concluded from this Notion, That as the World was created in six days, so after six days, *i. e.* six thousand years, it would be destroyed. Some when they have seen any extraordinary Judgments of Hail, or Rain, or Thunder, or Locusts, or great Confusions happen in the World, have from thence inferr'd the immediate coming of this Day. Some have placed it in one Year, some in another, but all these are needless Speculations. It's enough that the Decree is sealed in Heaven, that there will be such a prodigious day; and it was as truly at hand in Christ's time, as it is now, and now, as much as it was then; nay as much now, as it will be but a Year or a Month before it comes in good earnest; for the day of our Death is at hand, and we know not when, or how soon, whether this hour or the next, the fatal Messenger will arrest us in our Journey. The day of our Death is the fore-runner of that greater Day, and according as our Souls are found at the day of our Death, so they will be judged in that glorious

glorious day: the Judgment, that will be pronounced upon our Souls at our Death, will be proclaimed aloud before the whole World another day; and if they be ſo unhappy as to be condemned upon their departure hence, they will all that while, till the great day comes, torment themſelves with the thoughts of that Sentence, and the Shame that will enſue upon it, as holy Souls will comfort themſelves with the Thoughts of their Abſolution. Therefore, when our Souls leave this Body, that day and hour, is really a day of Judgment to us: and that this day is at hand, none but a Sot can deny; and accordingly all Men of Senſe have made, and do make early Preparation for it; and he that doth not imitate them, is ſo far from giving Proof to the World, that he is wiſer than they, that he proclaims his Stupidity, and in a manner, renounces his Portion in the Inheritance of the Saints in light. But then by Preparation I do not mean thoſe little Sprinklings of Devotion, which Hypocrites, and Men who pretend to love

God, yet will not part with their Lusts, usually lay upon his Altar, not the *Pharisees* Alms, and Fasts, and Prayer, which were performed with sinister designs, out of Vain-glory and Ostentation ; not *Ahab*'s Repentance, who put on Sack-cloath, and walk'd softly, but still kept an unmortified Heart ; not the *Harlots* Piety *Solomon Pro.*7.14. speaks of, who said her Orisons, and paid her Vows, and her Peace-offerings, and thought to make God amends for the Crimes she lived in, by these Services ; not *Judas* his Sorrow, who lamented his Sin, because he saw the Hell he was like to drop into ; not *Demas* his temporary Severity, which soon chang'd into fondness of the World ; not the *Angel* of *Sardis* his Profession of Religion, who had the name that he lived, but was dead ; not the *Jews* Zeal for the Ceremonial Part of God's Worship, while they neglected Justice, Mercy, Chastity, Sobriety and Charity ; not the Zeal of *Ezekiel*'s *Hearers*, who loved to hear, but were loath to do ; but,

but, if you would prepare for this day of Account, so as to be commended by the Judge, the Preparation must have these following ingredients.

1. *Pity those inconsiderate Men that live as if there were no future Judgment.* Say not, where are they to be found? There is no Country, no City, no Town, no Village, no Street, but the greater part of the Inhabitants live so. All that profess it, all that talk of it, all that live under Sermons which declare it, do not therefore believe it. No man believes it, that is not thereby restrained from Lusts, which war against the Soul. All that dare be lewd, and repent not, and do not amend their ways and their doings, whatever opinion they may have of themselves, in despight of their Profession are Infidels, and so much the greater Infidels, because they enjoy means of Grace, and Motives, and Reasons, and Arguments, and helps to believe it; and yet Act as if there were no such thing.

Expres

Expreſs your Compaſſion to their Souls by your Tears, ſince they will not weep for themſelves. Ah! miſerable Creatures! E'er long they ſhall ſee him whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one that mourns for his only Son, and they are not aware of it! They are haſtening to the Shambles, where they will be barbarouſly butcher'd by helliſh Furies, and they are not ſenſible of it! Oh, mourn for them! They deſerve your Pity more than Galley-Slaves, more than Wretches in *Turkiſh* Captivity: Oh! call to them, and ſee whether ye can yet perſwade them into a livelier Faith of this terrible Day. O that you could yet ſave their Souls from Death, and cover a multitude of Sins! It's like they'll ſcorn your Tears, and laugh at your Admonitions, for the God of this World hath blinded them; but, Oh! pray for them, that their Eyes may be open'd, that they may ſee the Precipice they run upon, and behold the bottomleſs Gulph, upon the Brink whereof, they ſtand. They are rolling down the Hill; Oh! ſtop them,

them, if you can, that they fall not into the Lake beneath: ſeeing your Zeal for their Souls, your concern for their Welfare, your entreaties to ſave themſelves from this Generation, your ſorrow for their undone Eſtate, your grief for their hardneſs of Heart, they may yet relent, and turn before the Lord comes, and ſmites the Earth with a Curſe.

2. *Every day ſpend ſome time in reflecting on this Day.* Is half an Hour, or a quarter of an Hour every Day, ſuch a buſineſs, that thou canſt find no time for it? How many parts of every day doſt thou ſpend idly and fooliſhly? Wouldſt not thou find greater Profit in beſtowing a few Minutes in Contemplation of that Judgment? Say not, who doth ſo? What? if none did it, if it be uſeful, and a Duty, a wiſe Man would think himſelf obliged to practiſe it, though he had no Company. It's granted the Age is bad, and few there be that will deviate from the Cuſtoms of their Neighbours; but without all peradventure, ſome there are, that are

ſeriouſly

ſeriouſly concerned about their Salvation, who make Conſcience of it. Had Men, when Chriſt converſed on Earth been diſcouraged, by the ſmall Numbers that followed him, from embracing his Doctrin and Diſcipline, how would the World have been Peopled with Chriſtians? Good *Elijah* was not frighted from cleaving to the true God, when he thought all the World was become Idolatrous, and why ſhouldſt thou be tempted to forget thy Everlaſting Intereſt, becauſe every Body in the Pariſh thou liveſt in, is not devout, and wiſe, and ſerious? Suppoſe thou didſt live in a Street, where all the Men were Beggars and Vagabonds, would that be a Motive, to follow their unlawful Calling? If a Treaſure were to be had in ſuch a place, and all about thee ſhould be regardleſs of it, wouldſt thou be as lazy as they?

The Merchant ventures into that Country, where he thinks none hath been before him, and doth promiſe himſelf a richer Return. In Trades, Men commonly chuſe that, of which there

there are but few Maſters, in hopes, they ſhall thrive the better for it. The ſame may be applied to the Buſineſs in Hand, reflecting every day upon that dreadful Account, which few will venture upon; thou wilt be a greater Gainer, and purchaſe a richer Peace and Satisfaction; thou wilt reſt more ſweetly at Night, than thy Neighbours, and thy Conſcience will be more at eaſe; thou wilt go about the Works of thy Calling more cheerfully, and thou wilt be able to comfort thy ſelf better, if any Affliction or Loſs do befall thee, than others, who converſe little with God and their own Souls.

In the Life of *Pachomius*, we read, That every day he uſed to beſpeak the ſeveral Parts and Members of his Body, and talk to them, as if they had been rational Creatures: Behold, ſaith he, my beloved Parts, I will adviſe you to nothing but what is wholſom, and uſeful for you, and therefore ſhew your ſelves obedient to my Counſel, and let's ſerve God cheerfully till we get to a better place. As to you my beloved Hands,

Hands, the time will come when you will no more be able to ſtrike your Neighbour, or play at Cards and Dice, and when you will not be able to reach any more after Goods, that do not belong to you. As to you, my beloved Feet, the time will come, when the way you have gone will be ſtopp'd up, and when ye will be no longer able to run into vain and looſe Company. Hearken unto me my Senſes, and whatever helps to make up this mortal Frame, let's ſtrive luſtily before Death overtake us, and ſtand boldly in the evil day, and fight bravely, till the great God put an end to our Sweat and Labour, and call us to his heavenly Kingdom. What will it profit you to taſte of all the Sweets of this World, if any thing can be called ſweet in ſo much Miſery? Why ſhould ye be loath to labour, when to labour ye were born? Why ſhould ye refuſe to ſuffer when ſhortly you muſt die, and mingle with Duſt? Why ſhould ye ſeek after a ſoft and eaſie Life, when e'er long you'll meet with it in Heaven? This is no Time,

Time, no Place for Pleaſure; that's only to be found among the Bleſſed above. This is it, that I would have you comprehend above all things, that through ſenſual Delights and Satisfactions Men go into unquenchable Fire; but through Bryars and Thorns lies the way to Joys, which ſhall never have an end. Why do ye murmur againſt me when I bid you faſt, and watch, and pray? Should I indulge you, it would be your Bane, it would be Cruelty in me to ſpare you; to give you Eaſe would be the way to precipitate my ſelf and you into endleſs Torment. Thus ſpake that holy Man to the reſpective Parts and Members of his Body: and thus, *Chriſtian*, do thou preach to thy Soul every day; ask it, which of thoſe two Sentences, that ſhall be pronounced in the laſt day, art thou moſt deſirous of; of that, *Come ye Bleſſed*, or of the other, *Depart ye Curſed*? If (as no Man is fond of Miſery) thou doſt hunger and thirſt after the former, come my Soul, let's retire, let's aſcend the Hill of God, and from thence take a view of what will

will be hereafter. The Posture of Affairs thou seest now, will not continue long; fancy thou sawest a Man whom the Divine Bounty hath crowned with variety of temporal Blessings. This Person having a mind to take his Pleasure, retires with his Family to his Country-House, adorned with *Tyrian* Silks, and *Persian* Carpets, and with all the Eastern Riches, and there lives merrily, and at his ease; one Night being very jovial at Supper, a Servant of his, base and ill-natured, puts some Lethargick, or Opiate Potion into his Master's and Fellow-Servants Cup; and having rocked them all asleep, opens the Doors, lets in Thieves, and Robbers, who having plunder'd the House, at last lay violent hands on the Master, and to make sport with him, drag him thus intoxicated into the open Field, and there leave him. In the mean while the Heavens grow black, and a hideous Tempest gathers in the Clouds, and the Sky begins to lighten, and the Voice of Thunder to be heard, and a dreadful

Vid Drexel. Tribun. Christi. l. 1. c. 8. §. 5.

dreadful Rain falls; and in the midſt of all this Noiſe and Confuſion, the beſotted Maſter wakes, looks about, quakes, trembles, believes himſelf in another World, is aſtoniſh'd to ſee himſelf lying on a barren Turf, without Servants, without Attendants, without Friends, without Neceſſaries, without Conveniencies, among Showers, and Storms, and Tempeſts, ſtiff with Cold, frozen to Death almoſt, and beholding nothing but Miſery about him.

O my Soul! thou canſt not but look upon ſuch a Perſon, as the very Emblem of Confuſion, and while thou dread'ſt this fearful State, take heed thou doſt not prepare for it, or drop into it; take heed of carnal Security, for that will expoſe thee to the Rage and Fury of helliſh Thieves, and make God's Indignation ſtrangely ſurprizing. The Terror that will ſeize the ſleepy Soul, when it is ſummon'd away to the Bar of a righteous God, will be beyond Storms of Hail, and Tempeſts of Rain, and Flaſhes of Lightning, and Claps of

Thunder. When Covetouſneſs would entice thee, ſhew it the miſerable *Gehazi* trembling before the Throne of God: when Luxury would tempt thee, bid it look upon the wretched *Belſhazzar*, mourning to eternal Ages for his Intemperance: when worldly Mindedneſs would debauch thee, find out *Nabal* among the damned Spirits, and with that Sight fright the fooliſh Luſt away: when Envy would enter into thy Soul, call out *Cain* from that unhappy Crew, and bid it ſee its Doom in his Funeral: when preſent Satisfactions would make thee ſlight the afterhopes of Glory, bid the profane *Eſau* ſtand forth from his fiery Cell, to which he is condemned, and it will loſe its Courage. Thou readeſt of the *Syrians*, how in a Conſternation ſent upon them from above, they fled in the Night, leaving all their Proviſion behind them. But what is this to the Conſternation, the Judgment Seat of Chriſt will ſtrike into that Man, who having ſlighted his Commands, is on a ſudden ordered to come and anſwer the Reaſon of his Contempt;

Contempt; and forced to leave all his vain Excuſes, and Apologies behind him. The Name of ſome Warriours hath frighted Men, Women, and Children; and then how terrible will the Name of the *Lord of Hoſts* be to them, that have fought againſt his Holy Spirit by their Stubbornneſs! O my Soul, *Bleſſed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame*, Rev. 16. 15.

3. *Walk circumſpectly every Day, and uſe that conſcientiouſneſs, you would uſe, were you ſure, you ſhould be ſummon'd to Judgment at Night.* To be ſure a dayly Conſcientiouſneſs can do no harm. It may poſſibly deprive thee of the Pleaſure of bad Company, but where is the loſs, when by that means thou preſerveſt thy better Part from being wounded? May be, thou may'ſt get the ill Will of ſome men, that hate any man, that will not run with them into exceſs of Riot, but their Hatred is better than their Love; not that a Man is to be fond of the Hatred of others; but ſince

the World does love his own, and is fond only of People, as looſe as themſelves, it is a Mercy to be hated by ſuch men, becauſe it is a ſign we are not of their Temper. The love of good men is ever to be valued, but that of men looſe and profane, is but a trouble, except it can be had, without participating of their ſins.

Say not, next Year, or when I have accompliſhed ſuch a Buſineſs, I will trim my Lamp, and make it ready againſt the Bridegroom comes. Every Day to live in expectation of the Summons, is the act of a Wiſe and Bleſſed Servant: And he that every Day walks with God, walks in a mighty ſenſe of his Omniſcience, and Omnipreſence, and in his company, buſineſs, converſation, dealings, keeps God in his Eye, ſets his Laws before him, walks as one reſolved to pleaſe God in all things, lets not a Day paſs over his Head without doing ſome good, uſes the World, as if he uſed it not, and if through inadvertency he ſlips, riſes again preſently, and arms himſelf with freſh reſolutions,

is the Perſon, that lives every Day, as if it were his laſt Day.

Sinner, wert thou ſure, that this Night thou ſhouldſt be ſummon'd to the Bar of God, wouldſt thou ſwear and lie, and diſſemble, and be Cholerick, or backward to good works? Live, as if thou wert ſure of it: For ſuppoſe thou continueſt in the Land of the Living that Night, thou loſeſt nothing by this Preparation, nay, thou art a mighty gainer by it, for hereby thy Soul is refreſh'd thy Mind preſerved in an excellent temper, thy Goodneſs ſtrengthen'd, thy Graces renew'd, thy Affections enlarg'd, thy Underſtanding enlightned, thy Will made more tractable, thy Spirits eaſed, thy Calmneſs maintain'd, and thy very Body kept in Health. God loves thee, the Promiſes of the Goſpel belong to thee: Devils cannot hurt thee, thou liveſt like a Chriſtian, acteſt like a Man of Reaſon, prepareſt for thine own quiet, thy Condition is happy, thy Eſtate ſafe, thy Life out of danger, thy Conſcience clear, thy Confidence in God encreaſes, thy Satisfacti-

on ſwells, thy Comforts grow bigger, and thou freeſt thy ſelf from that Mire and Clay, in which ſo many Souls do ſtick, and deliverest thy Soul from that terrible Pit, which ſwallows up ſo many imprudent *Travellers.*

4. *When ever you ſee, or hear of the judicial Proceſs of a Malefactor, think, and reflect upon this Day.* To take occaſion from things we ſee or hear, to improve our Minds; and to Meditate on things uſeful and great, and beneficial, is the part of a wiſe Man, and a Chriſtian, who is to remember, that his Reaſon is not given him, only to teach him how to live eaſie, but chiefly to direct him, how to Purifie his outward and inward Man. The great Deſign of the Goſpel, is to refine our Reaſon, and to make it ſubſervient to the Purpoſes of a Spiritual Life; and he that makes External Objects Inſtruments of ſpiritual Thoughts, and leads his Conſideration from things viſible, to thoſe, which are not ſeen, imitates the Holy Apoſtles, and the beſt Patterns,

terns, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. The Judicial Proceſs of a Malefactor hath many Circumſtances in it, which very much reſemble the Proceedings of the laſt Day. Indeed our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. 25, 26. deſcribes the laſt Judgment, by the Proceſſes made for Malefactors in this World. *Agree*, ſaith he, *with thine Adverſary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, leſt at any time the Adverſary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be caſt into Priſon: Verily, I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt Farthing.* In which Words, Chriſt repreſents to us the Scene of the future Judgment, and conſequently intimates, that when we behold the one, we ſhould ſpend ſome ſerious thoughts upon the other.

Think how terrible the ſight of the Judge is to the guilty Priſoner, and how much more terrible the ſight of a Majeſtick God, will be to the unhappy Sinner that would not be kept in by

the Laws, and Sanctions of the great Commander of the World, and ſtood more in awe of a Child, or Servant, when he was going to commit lewdneſs, than of him who gave him life, and being: Think how the Malefactor is frighted and confounded with the vaſt company of Men and Women, that crowd in to hear his Tryal, and how much more the impenitent Sinner will be aſhamed in the laſt Day, when all the People that have been ſince the Creation of the World will look upon him, and hear what his fate will be; ſome Orators have been ſtruck dumb with the greatneſs of their Auditory, what effect then may we ſuppoſe will the Congregation of Mankind have upon a Wretch, that never ſaw the hundred thouſandth part of them before?

"Think how it muſt be with the Malefactor, before the Sentence of Death paſſes upon him, how heavy his mind is, how Melancholick his Thoughts, how drooping his Spirits are, and what Palpitations he feels about his Heart, and

and how far greater the heavineſs of the ſinful Soul muſt be before the Sentence of Condemnation proceeds againſt her, from the mouth of God, how much more ſad remembrances, how much more diſmal reflections will ſeize upon her!

And if it be ſo ſad with her, before the Sentence be paſt, what trembling and horror will invade her after it? A Malefactor here on Earth may yet entertain hopes of Pardon, his Prince may be merciful, pity the diſtreſſed condition of his Family, remember paſt ſervices, and relent, and change the Sentence, but the ſinful Soul once condemned to ſuffer, hath no hopes of forgiveneſs, no hopes of being Repriv'd, no hopes of being releaſed; not but that God is infinitely more merciful, than the meekeſt Prince on Earth can be, but the time of Mercy is paſt. Once he was merciful to her to a Miracle, his Mercy was her Shield, Mercy did encompaſs her, Mercy lay entreating her, Mercy courted her; Mercy though abuſed, came again, and tryed new arguments,

guments; Mercy followed her, Mercy preſerved her from a Thouſand Evils, Mercy would not ſuffer the roaring Lion to touch her for many years, Mercy ſtood by her, even then, when ſhe deſperately affronted her Maker, Mercy was patient towards her, Mercy wept over her, Mercy call'd to her, Mercy would have pull'd her away from her Errors, but ſhe thruſt this bright Angel away, would have none of it, made light of it, laught at its charms, deſpiſed its entreaties, ſcorned its carreſſes, diſregarded its ſmiles, refuſed its offers, rejected its embraces, and therefore cannot feed her ſelf with hopes of Pardon now.

Nay, the Malefactor here on Earth, when Men will not Pardon, hath yet hopes, that upon his true Repentance God will Pardon him; but the Soul that departs hence in a ſenſual, carnal condition, the ſame ſhe lived in, hath no higher Court to appeal to, none above God to make her moan to, none beyond the ſupream Law-giver to addreſs her ſelf to. The God ſhe hath

deſpiſed

deſpiſed, and whoſe Mercy could make no impreſſion on her, is to be her laſt Judge, and therefore how much more diſconſolate muſt her ſtate be, than the condemn'd Malefactor's here on Earth!

5. *Whenever you converſe with ſick and dying men, and are preſent, when their Breath leaves their Bodies, think, and reflect upon this Day.* He viſits a dying Friend to little purpoſe, that only comes to condole with him, or to look upon him, or to ask him how he doth, or what Medicines he hath taken, or what Phyſitian he hath made uſe of.

The Chamber of a dying Perſon ſhould make us as ſerious, as a Church, and compoſe our Thoughts as much, as an Oratory: In ſuch a Room there are various Objects, that invite us to Pious Thoughts, and do naturally ſuggeſt to us, very ſerious Conſiderations; the ſad looks of the Spectators, the Groans of Relations, the Tears of Friends, the Lamentations of Neighbours, and the dying Perſons Pain and Miſery,

Misery, and perhaps doubts of his Salvation, which are not to be beheld with a careleſs Eye. So that when you ſee the dying Perſon near Expiring, think with your ſelves, This man is going to be judged, his Soul is entring into the Territories of another World, to know what her everlaſting ſtate muſt be: This will ſhortly be my caſe. I muſt e'er long follow her to God's Tribunal; here my ſtay will be but ſhort; here I have no continuing City; here I am not to tarry long; my Friend, that's gone, ſhews me the way that I muſt go. I ſaw him expire, I heard his laſt groans, I was by, when his Eye-ſtrings broke; if the Lord Jeſus gave him any aſſurance of his favour, before he died, with what chearfulneſs will his Soul meet her Bridegroom in the Air; how welcome will he be in the Court of the great King! What rejoycing will there be, when he, and the other glorified ſpirits behold one another, and they ſee that one more is added to their Number; for there is no envy in Heaven, no grudges, no fretting

fretting, becauſe ſo many are admitted into the Everlaſting Manſions, but the more holy Souls do enter there, the more their joy encreaſes: If this my Friend hath lived above the World, while he lived here, with what gladneſs will his Soul be brought, and enter into the Kings Palace! How will his Name be remembred there! How kindly will Angels talk of him! How favourable will the Judge be to him! but if his Devotion and Piety hath been but Paint and Shew, what a ſurprize will it be, immediately upon his coming among the ſpirits of another World to be arreſted at the ſuit of the Great God, and to be carried away to his Tryal! He is taken away from his ſick Bed, but ſhould his Soul be ſent away with a Curſe, how much worſe will Hell be, than his ſick Bed! In a ſick Bed Phyſick may yet give ſome eaſe, but Hell ſcorns all Medicines, no Drugs are of any uſe there, no Cordials, no Cataplaſms are to be found there, no vulnerary Herbs grow in that Wilderneſs: On a ſick Bed, Friends may yet comfort

comfort us; but in Hell, there is no Friend, all are Enemies, all hate one another, becauſe none can deliver the other from his Torments: In a ſick Bed Neighbours may give their advice, but in Hell no advice can be given; for the Inhabitants are not capable of taking it: The Devils indeed may adviſe them to ſpeak evil of God, becauſe of the irreverſible doom they lie under, but that's a Remedy infinitely worſe than the Diſeaſe, and they that follow this counſel increaſe God's Anger, and their own Plagues, and as they venture upon new Sins, ſo God muſt inflict new Curſes, and try new Rods and new Scourges, which makes the miſery truly infinite.

Such Reflections the ſight of a ſick and dying Man will cauſe; nor is this judging of his everlaſting and final State but a mere occaſional Meditation, undertaken for no other end, but to affect our own Souls with the day of God's righteous Judgment, to improve our own Thoughts, and to make a holy uſe of ſuch Occaſions,

as

as God's Providence thinks fit to present to us.

6. *Whenever you go to a Funeral, think of this Day of Judgment.* It's a marvellous thing to see, how Men spend their time at Funerals. Though they are in the Room where the dead Body lies, yet they drink, and laugh, and are merry, and talk of any thing, that their Fancy, or their Business, or the Reports of People abroad do suggest. Though Death stands before them, and the Corps seems to exhort them to Contemplations of their Mortality, and the Consequences of Death, yet how carefully do they shun all Discourses and Thoughts of that Nature? The Life, the Actions, the Vertues, and the good Qualities of the dead Persons, might deserve some Pious Conferences; or his Change, and passing from this Life into another, and being freed from the Burden of the Flesh, and from innumerable Troubles and Vexations, which this Life is subject to, would be no unseasonable Subject of Discourse upon such Occasions.

ſions. But ſo great is the Averſion o moſt men from ſuch kind of Enter tainments, that any thing rather tha this, though never ſo frivolous, ſhal be hearken'd to, and either the News of the Town, or their Trade, or their Merchandiſe, or their Sports, or ſome thing of this Nature, is preferr'd be fore the melancholy Proſpect of Eternity: Or if ſome Pious Perſon, be gins a Spiritual Diſcourſe, or to talk of ſomething ſuitable to that Occaſi on, the Company is ſtruck dumb on a ſudden, and glad when the Stream turns, and ſome other impertinent Subject is pitch'd upon. In a word, Men go to a Funeral, as to a Play, or Shew ; and as they bring no ſerious Thoughts with them, ſo they carry none away. But thus it muſt not be with you, who are ſenſible that ſuch Opportunities are preſented to you by Providence, to ſtrengthen your inward Man. And therefore, when you ſee the Mourners go about the Streets, when you your ſelves accompany the Corps to the Grave, think of the great

Sentence

Sentence the Soul will receive upon her Approaches to the Throne of the Heavenly Majesty. St. *Hierom* describing the Funeral of the happy *Paula*, that famous Saint, who while she lived here, was Eyes to the Blind, a Nurse of the Poor, a Staff to the Lame, and an Example to all religious Persons, tells us, That when she was dead, there were heard no Shrieks, no Howlings, no Weeping, no despairing Lamentations, but Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs: her Corps was carried to the Grave upon Bishops Shoulders, Prelates carried Lamps and Wax-Candles before her, and a Quire of Singing-Men accompanied her to her Tomb, and most of the People of *Palestina* came together to attend the Funeral. The Monks crept out of their Cells, the Virgins from their Retirement, and good Men, in all Places thereabout, thought it Sacriledge not to pay the last Office to her. The Widows and Orphans, as in the case of *Dorcas*, came, and shew'd the

In Epitaph Paulæ Rom.

Garments ſhe had made for them; and all the indigent and needy cryed, they had loſt a Mother: and for three Days, Pſalms were ſung in *Greek*, *Hebrew*, *Latin*, and *Syriack*; and every Body celebrated her Funeral as if it had been their own.

When you behold the Funeral of ſuch a holy Perſon, think, how with far greater Pomp the Angels meet the Soul of the deceaſed at the Gates of Heaven, and on their Shoulders, carry it to the Throne of everlaſting Mercy. Think how joyfully thoſe bleſſed Miniſters conduct ſuch a Soul to her eternal Reſt, and how they triumph that ſhe is deliver'd from the Burden of the Fleſh, and advanced from a Valley of Tears, to a place of endleſs Glory. When the great *Conſtantius* died in *Britain*, his Aſhes were put in a golden Cheſt, and with great Pomp carried through *France*, and *Italy*, to *Rome*; but, think how far greater Honour it is, for ſuch a holy Soul to be convey'd by the Spirits of Light into the City coming down from Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned

for her Husband, the twelve Gates whereof are twelve Pearls, and the Streets pure Gold, as it were tranſparent Glaſs. *Rev.* 21. 20, 21.

On the other ſide; when you ſee the ſtately Funeral of a voluptuous and ſenſual Man, ſuch as *Attila* was, the Soldiers tearing their Hair, the Courtiers weeping, the Body wrap'd up in Silk, the Guard proclaiming his valiant Actions, and Monuments erected upon the Grave, of Gold, of Silver, and of Iron; think on the more diſmal Funeral of his Soul, in caſe it was not waſh'd here with the Waters of Repentance, and which is the greateſt Purification, with the Blood of Jeſus: think, if the Soul be for ever ſeparated from the glorious Preſence of God, and commanded away into everlaſting Darkneſs, not all the ſtately Monuments raiſed for the honour of her Body will qualifie her Miſery in the other World; not all the Acclamations or Applauſes of Flatterers will give her any Comfort, not all the Riches ſhe en-

joy'd on Earth, nor all her Wealth and Greatneſs, and Dominion, will there extinguiſh the leaſt Spark of Fire her Conſcience will feel. This dreadful Funeral will be attended with crouds of unhappy Spirits, who, inſtead of mourning, will rejoyce at the Gueſt that's come into their Tents, and *Lycaon* like, cover her with eternal Darkneſs. Such a Soul is laid in a worſe Grave than her Body, even in the burning Lake, where the Miſery is proportion'd to her former Sins, and her Conſcience frighted with Scenes of Horror; and the Remembrance of her *quondam* Pomp encreaſes her Diſcontent and Anguiſh: think of this, and learn to be ſober; think of this, and learn ſelf-denial; think of this, and learn not to love the World: think of this, and learn to ſecure the Light of God's Countenance: think of this, and learn to honour them that fear the Lord: think of this, and learn to do good in your Generation.

7. *To avoid the Terror of this future Judgment, judge your ſelves here on Earth; for if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not*

not be judged, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. Then we judge our ſelves, when we confeſs our particular Errors; and condemn our ſelves for the Commiſſion, when with Grief, and ſorrow of Heart, and Indignation againſt our ſelves, we do acknowledge, that we have abuſed the Divine Mercy, and by ſo doing, deſerved his taking his holy Spirit from us; when we lay his Threatnings before us, and confeſs that theſe Plagues are due to us, and that we have deſerved them, and wonder at the Patience of God that hitherto hath been loath to give order to the deſtroying Angel to ſeize on us; when, from a ſenſe of our Neglects and Sins, we cry, *It is a bitter thing and evil, that we have forſaken the Lord, and that his Fear hath not been in us*, and are ſo convinced of our Demerits that we can give no other Reaſon for our Eſcape and Preſervation ſo long, but God's infinite Goodneſs.

This is to accuſe our ſelves; a neceſſary Part or Action in this Judgment; ſo far from being unnatural, that it is a

very ordinary, nay, neceſſary Effect of true Repentance. In humane Courts of Judicature, the Malefactor is not bound to accuſe himſelf; but in the Court of Conſcience, when we ſtand before God, and remember we have to deal with the Searcher of Hearts; to accuſe our ſelves before him, is not only our Duty, but our Intereſt; we are gainers, and advantage our Cauſe by it, and render God propitious and kind, not that we make any alteration in God's Nature, but we rely upon his promiſe, which is, that he will ſpare us upon this Self-accuſation: Nor is this all, but we proſecute the task of judging our ſelves, when we are angry with our ſelves for our imprudence in neglecting ſo great Salvation, and ſtudy, how to be revenged upon our Corruptions; when we decry our inward, and outward failings, and are reſolved to mortifie them, were they as dear to us, as our right Hand and Foot, and the Apple of our Eye; when we erect a Tribunal in our Souls, and bid our diſorderly Thoughts, and Words, and Actions appear

pear before us, and give an account of their behaviour, and finding they have been exorbitant, laſh them into better manners; when we lay mulcts on our inordinate deſires, in caſe they will not yield, and put our Fleſh to ſome more than ordinary trouble, in caſe it will not be kept within its due bounds and limits; when we puniſh our Eyes, by fixing them ſo many minutes on Heaven, or on the Word of God, becauſe they gazed on things, which God hath forbid; when we chaſtiſe our Ears with hearing ſo many Sermons, becauſe ſuch a Day, they liſtned with pleaſure to an offenſive ſtory; when we inflict ſilence upon our Tongues for ſome days, becauſe ſuch a time they ſpake things either undecent, or injurious to our Neighbours; when we bid our Feet keep at home for a conſiderable time, becauſe they ran into evil Company, when they ſhould not; when we deny our Body its neceſſary Food and Refreſhment for ſome time, becauſe it pamper'd it ſelf ſuch a Day, and play'd the wanton; when we will not let our ſen-

ſual Appetite enjoy its harmleſs, and innocent delights for a certain time, becauſe the other Day it was greedy after outward and carnal ſatisfactions; when we ſuffer our ſelves to be reproached without anſwering, becauſe ſuch a Day we flew out into an unruly paſſion.

This is to judge our ſelves, and they that do ſo, may be confident, they ſhall not be condemn'd with the World; in doing ſo, we do that to our ſelves, which God would have done to us, if we had continued impenitent, and inſenſible, and take that vengeance of our ſelves, which God would have taken of us in a ſeverer manner, in caſe we had not bethought our ſelves; and thus we prevent his anger, and ſhew, that we dread his Wrath, and ſeek his Love, that his Threatnings fright us, and that we have juſt apprehenſions of his Indignation; and ſuch men the Holy Ghoſt counts happy, for, bleſſed *is he, that feareth always*, ſaith the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 28. 14.

8. *In your Actions, regard not ſo much how they are reliſh'd with Men, as whether they will hold Water, and endure the Teſt,*

before

before the Judge, when your naked Souls must appear before him. It is a very great fault, to govern our ſelves by the Opinion of Men: Even Heathen Philoſophers ſaw, that the way to Virtue, was to deſpiſe the Opinions of Men. And indeed, where we make meer Opinions the meaſure of our Goodneſs, we cannot but run into very great Errors. It's true, we are to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all Men, and we are not to give Offence to others in any thing, eſpecially in matters where Duty is not concerned, and we are concerned to let our light ſhine before Men, that others may ſee our good Works, and may praiſe our Father which is in Heaven; but this differs very much from governing our ſelves in matters of good and evil, by the Opinions of Men. We are not therefore to think, our Actions are truly good, becauſe Men have a high Opinion of them, nor to believe there is no hurt in many things we do, becauſe men ſee none, or becauſe they are charitable, and will not put an ill Conſtruction upon them.

Abundance

Abundance of our Actions appear plauſible to men, who ſee no further than the outſide; but let's conſider, whether they will bear the piercing Eye of this All-ſeeing Judge; it's true, ſhould God lay our Righteouſneſs to the Line, and meaſure our Religious actions by the exact Rule of his Wiſdom, Juſtice and Holineſs, he would ſpy innumerable flaws even in the Services of the devouteſt Perſon living, but he proceeds not according to that rigour, for the great Mediators ſake he makes large allowances for accidental infirmities, and incogitances, and unforeſeen, and involuntary ſlips, and the ſincerity of a good work is, that he chiefly takes notice of, whether the intention was good, whether the deſign was Holy, whether Love was the Principle of it, whether it was without reſerves of ſome ſecret ſin, whether there was candour, and ingenuity in it, and whether the offering was free, unforced, unconſtrain'd by any outward Motive, and whether Charity lay at the bottom.

Many

Many of our Actions may want these qualifications of Sincerity, and yet appear specious, and gay, and glorious in the Eyes of Spectators, and those we converse withal: Look not *Christians* on the commendations of your Neighbours in your acts of Piety, but on the commendations of that Judge, to whom ye must give an account; for *not he that commends himself, or whom men commend, is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth*, 2 Cor. 10. 18. If he do not commend our works, all the approbations of Mortal men, will do us but little good another day; and serve only to tell us, that we were cheated by those *Encomiums*. Alas! How many men are counted Just and Righteous, Honest and Good, here on Earth, whom the great Judge will not find so, when he comes to examine their deeds by the Rule of Sincerity! Sirs! matter not, whether men do look upon you as devout, but pray that God may esteem you so; Alas, what doth it signifie, that men call me Religious, when God knows, I am an Hypocrite? What comfort can it be to me,

me, that men think me charitable, when God ſees, I give Alms to be ſeen of men? What will it profit me, that men call me Zealous and Fervent, when God ſees, that gain, and profit is the cauſe of it? What doth it avail me, that men ſay, I pray well, when God ſees, I ſtudy to pleaſe the Company? What great matter is it, that men applaud me for a ſingle Virtue, when God ſees I am partial in my Obedience? What great advantage can it be to me, that men ſay I am humble, when God ſees pride in that very humility? The Apoſtle therefore bids us look to the manner of our performances; *He that gives, let him do it with ſimplicity; He that rules, with diligence; He that ſhews Mercy, with cheerfulneſs; Let love be without diſſimulation, be kindly affectioned one to another with Brotherly Love*, &c. Rom. 12. 8, 9, 10.

So, when you pray, let your Hearts breath out holy Deſires; when you ſing, let your Minds bear a principal Part in the Hymn; when you come to the Table of the Lord, let your Souls be touch'd with

with the Love of *Jesus*; when you are kind to your Neighbours, baniſh all ſiniſter Deſigns; when you expreſs any holy Fervours, let God's Glory be in your Eye; when you diſcharge any part of your Duty to God and Man, let a cheerful Obedience to the Goſpel be the Motive: Do all this as unto God, not as unto Men; do it, as if no Creature ſaw you; do it, as if none but God were before you; do it, as if you were to be ſummoned this Moment to Judgment: ſuch Services will endure the *Probe*, ſuch Devotions will ſtand good, ſuch Acts of Piety will bear ſearching, ſuch Works God himſelf will bear witneſs of, that they were wrought according to his Will, and by the Power of his holy Spirit.

9. *What Injuries you receive in this World from Men, bear them patiently, out of regard to this great Day of Judgment, when God will ſet all things to rights, and take care that you loſe nothing by your Sufferings.* Rejoyce Chriſtian in thine Innocence, which God intends to proclaim in this Day before all Men and Angels.

He'll

He'll wipe off all the Dirt and Aſperſions that are thrown upon thee, in that day: He *will bring forth thy Righteouſneſs as the Light, and thy Judgment as the Noon-day.* Pſal. 37.6. What need'ſt thou take notice of an Affront offer'd to thee, when thy God ſtands engaged to take notice of it with a Witneſs in that day? What need'ſt thou ſeek Revenge, when thy Maſter whom thou ſerveſt, is reſolved to judge thy Cauſe in that Day? What need'ſt thou fret and rage at the Contempt, Men put upon thee here, when thy great Lord will be ſufficiently angry with the Offender in that day? What need'ſt thou grieve that Men abuſe thee here, when thy Sovereign Maſter will grieve every Vein of the Reviler's Heart in that day? What need'ſt thou be concerned for the Reproaches Men caſt upon thee for thy Righteouſneſs ſake, when he, for whoſe Name thou ſuffereſt, will vindicate thy Wrongs, and call the Perſecuter Fool for his Pains in that day?

Say not, At this rate there will be no living

living for me in the World; but truſt that God, who hath promiſed to clear thy Innocence in that day, and he will hide thee under the ſhadow of his Wings, while thou art in this troubleſome World: he that preſerved *Elijah* when *Ahab*, and *Jezabel*, and all the Prophets of *Baal* were enraged againſt him, knows how to keep thee in the Hour of Temptation. Ay, but Revenge is ſweet! What if it be ſo to Fleſh and Blood? it will prove bitter to thy Spirit: and if ever thou art ſaved, a bitter Repentance muſt come in, and ſalve the Wound; and wilt thou prepare for a needleſs and uncertain Repentance? How knoweſt thou, whether God will after the Fact, give thee his holy Spirit to come to this Repentance? And what Cruelty is it, when God is reſolved to revenge thy Quarrel, that thou wilt needs revenge it too? If thou revengeſt it, God will take no care to plead for thee; but if thou leave thy Cauſe entirely to him, thy patience will be infinitely recompens'd in that day. Thus did thy bleſſed Maſter, who *when he ſuf-*

fer'd

fer'd, threatned not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously.

1 Pet. 2. 23.

Wilt thou boast of being his Disciple, and art thou loath to follow his Example? Fear not, those Men who wrong thee now, will be sufficiently sorry for the Injury, either here, if ever they be truly converted; or hereafter, when the Almighty will convince them to their everlasting Grief, how much they were mistaken in their Verdicts, and what siniſter Constructions they put upon thy Actions, how barbarous their Rage was against thee, how inhumane the ill Language they gave thee, and how unjust all their Reproaches were. Do but stay a little while, and thou shalt see it with thine Eyes: Have but Patience until that appointed day, and thou wilt find, the Prophet was in the right, when he said, *The Righteous shall rejoyce when he sees the Vengeance, so that a Man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the Righteous; Verily, he is a God that judges in the earth,* Psal. 58. 9, 10.

10. *Con-*

10. *Conſider particularly, That it will be more tolerable for Heathens, and profeſſed Infidels at this day, than for Chriſtians*; and not without reaſon. Matt. 11. 22. Treaſon is more excuſable in a *Stranger* than in a *Citizen* or *Domeſtick*, and more may be pleaded for a ſinful Life in a Pagan, than in one of Chriſt's own Houſhold. A Heathen is obliged to God by the Right of Creation and Preſervation; but a Chriſtian hath, beſides theſe, Baptiſm, and his Vows, to tye him: his Motives to the Fear of God are ſtronger than they can be in other Religions. Where the greateſt Rewards are, there we may juſtly believe People will be moſt induſtrious, moſt laborious, and moſt ſedulous. No Religion propoſes thoſe rewards, that Chriſtianity doth. The Heathens either had doubtful Apprehenſions of an everlaſting Happineſs, or were Strangers to the nature of it. Among us this endleſs Glory is not only profeſſed, but moſt clearly revealed; we are ſure of it, confident of it, have no reaſon to diſpute the cer-

tainty of it, and the nature of it is discovered to us by him who came out of his Fathers Bosom; therefore he that under these Manifestations proves careless and negligent of God's Love, can have no Excuse.

And as Heaven is or may be seen in all its Glories among us, so we are assured of a burning Lake, of an endless Misery, which attends the unconscionable and disobedient; whereof the Notions of Pagans, and Idolaters, were but dark, and consequently we have a stronger Bridle to curb the Violence of our sinful Desires than they; and therefore this must make our Doom more terrible.

The helps we have to arrive to Vertue are not only more in number, but more powerful, our Knowledge is greater, our Instructions greater, our Illumination greater, our means of Grace richer; and we have greater Examples of Holiness than ever the Heathen had; we have besides Philosophy, and the Law of Nature, the Sacred Scriptures, and besides Conscience, the Spirit of God

God to exhort us, to reprove us, to admoniſh us, to aſſiſt us, and to help our Infirmities. If a Heathen ſin, he doth but ſtumble in the dark; if a Chriſtian ſin, he falls at Noon-day. We have Sacraments to bind us to a perfect hatred of Sin; and *Semiramis* took no more pains to fence her City with Brick Walls, than the Almighty doth our Souls from falling a Prey to the Prince of Darkneſs; nay, our Impediments in our way to Bliſs are leſs than the Pagans had: by Baptiſm, and the Power of Chriſts Death, the Powers of Darkneſs are broken, the Devil's Strength is much abated, his Arrows are not half ſo fiery as once they were. The Heathens have far greater Obſtacles. The Devils Power among them ſeems unlimited, and therefore for us to fall a Prey to this Enemy, for us to yield to his Suggeſtions, for us to be drawn into his Net, will ſcarce admit of a charitable Apology.

Theſe things are now made light of; but nothing is more reaſonable, than that they who have abuſed the greateſt Mercy, ſhould feel the ſevereſt Laſhes;

Chriſtian, why ſhould God give thee greater Light, and greater advantages, than to other men? They are men of the ſame paſſions thou art of, and they are Fleſh, and have Reaſon, and are God's Creatures; and depend upon his Providence, as well as thou; and why ſhould God make a difference betwixt thee and them? No other Reaſon can be aſſigned, but his undeſerved compaſſion. Thou wicked Servant, had thy Maſter a greater kindneſs for thee, than for thy fellow-Servants, and could not this diſtinguiſhing kindneſs prevail with thee to be faithful, and loyal to him? Thy ingratitude is abominable, and thy torment ſhall be proportionable: Thy impiety was intolerable, and thy flames ſhall be ſo too: Thy baſeneſs is inexpreſſible, and thy plagues ſhall be ſo too: Thy unworthineſs is uncommon, and thy agonies ſhall be ſo too: Thou deſerveſt a bitterer Cup, and thou ſhalt drink it too. If God ſhould not puniſh thee more than Heathens, he would be partial, his Honour would ſuffer in the indulgence, and he hath but little encouragement

ragement from thy good nature to leſſen his Wrath and Fury.

Dionyſius talked Atheiſtically, as well as thou, but he had no Scripture to direct him. The *Sybarites* were luxurious as thou art, but they knew not what the Goſpel meant. *Novellius Torquatus* was given to drunkenneſs, as thou art, but he never made Vows againſt it in a Sacrament of Baptiſm. *Tarquinius* was proud, as thou art, but he never heard of the humble *Jeſus*. *Julia* was vain in her dreſs and habit, as thou art, but ſhe underſtood not, what the ſtupendious Work of Redemption meant. *Decius Mundus* was lecherous as thou art, but he was not acquainted with a Holy, Sanctifying Spirit. *Themiſtocles* was envious, as thou art, but he never heard God ſpeaking to him by his Son. *Epicurus* was careleſs of a future Immortality, but he had not Miniſters to preach to him. *Simonides* was covetous, as thou art, but he knew of no Articles of belief. *Philagrius* was cholerick as thou art, but he made no profeſſion of Goodneſs and Religion. *Siſamenes* was unjuſt

juſt as thou art, but he never heard, that the Unrighteous are not to inherit the Kingdom of God. *Unidius* was uncharitable as thou art, but he had not that Cloud of Witneſſes, thoſe holy Examples that thou haſt. *Sardanapalus* minded nothing but his Luſts, and Belly, as thou doſt, but he never heard of a Crucified Saviour. *Democles* was a flatterer and diſſembler, as thou art, but the Terrors of the Lord were never manifeſted to him. All which advantages thou poſſeſſeſt above theſe *Pagans*, therefore it muſt needs be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* at the Day of Judgment, than for thee.

11. *Let the proceſs of this Day among other Vertues, engage you particularly to a practical Charity, and readineſs to do good to others, who are under affliction*, eſpecially where God hath bleſſed you with conveniences, and ſuperfluities; for the Judge is reſolved to inſiſt upon this Vertue more than others: This he has not only aſſured us of, *Matth.* 25. 34, 35, *&c.* but it is alſo the moſt reaſonable thing in the World, that we who

who hope to find Mercy in that Day, ſhould be acquainted with ſhewing Mercy to Chriſt's diſtreſſed members here; for it is Chriſt's Rule, that *with what Meaſure we mete here, with the ſame Meaſure it ſhall be meted to us again*; and to this purpoſe the Apoſtle, *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; but he that ſows bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. — The Virgins that wanted Oyl, were excluded from the Wedding-feaſt, when the Bridegroom came; that Oyl was Charity, which therefore the good *Samaritan* poured into the Wounds of the diſtreſſed Man; and as Oyl ſupples the the Joints, gives eaſe to the part, which is in pain, and is an ingredient of moſt Chyrurgical Operations, ſo Charity relieves the Miſerable, and refreſhes the Calamitous, and hath an influence upon all other Vertues. It was therefore wiſely ſaid by that pious Duke of *Savoy*, when one ask'd him, where his hunting Dogs were; he led them into his Hall, where abundance of Lame, and Blind, Luke 6. 38.

and Poor People fed at his coſt and charges; theſe, ſaith he, are my Dogs that ſerve me in my hunting after Heaven and Happineſs: All other Vertues loſe their glory, where Charity doth not bear them company. To this Vertue we are born, and it is the moſt eaſie of all the reſt, and therefore to want it when we come before the Judge, muſt needs turn his Face, and Favour from us.

And it is remarkable, that the Judge repreſents all the acts of Charity, he reckons up in this Day, as done to himſelf, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink*, &c. whereby he doth not only intimate the cloſe union, and communion, the poor Man hath with him, inſomuch that he is one with him, but ſhews, that in our Alms, and doing good we muſt have reſpect chiefly to *Chriſt Jeſus*. Let the Man, that begs thy Charity or wants thy Relief, be brought to Poverty by his own folly, let him be wicked, let him be ungrateful; give him with reſpect to thy Saviour; look upon Chriſt when thou doſt ſupply his wants; have the

the Lord Jesus in thine Eyes, regard not so much the poor Man's Nature, because he is of the same Flesh with thee, nor so much his Relation, because he is of Kin to thee, nor so much his Country, because he is of the same Town, that thou art of, nor so much his Religion, because he professes the same Faith with thee, nor so much his Person, because he is a Gentleman, nor so much his readiness to extol thy bounty, as the Love and Charity of the Holy *Jesus* to thy Soul and Body. Have that in thine Eye chiefly, when thou openest thy Hand, let him be in thy Mind, when thou distributest thy bounty; this makes thy Charity amiable, and acceptable, and fit to be proclaimed, and commended in this Day.

And indeed, How dost thou know Christian, but that thy Saviour may sometimes disguise himself, and appear to thee in the shape of a poor Man, and wilt not thou give freely, wilt not thou give cheerfully, wilt not thou give readily, since thou knowest not, but thou may'st give it to thy Saviour himself?

And

And how glorious an *Encomium* will it be in the laſt Day, to hear him ſay before the World, *I was naked, and this good Man cloathed me, I was in Priſon, and he viſited me!* The three Angels of Old diſguiſed themſelves in the ſhape of Travellers, to try *Abraham*'s hoſpitality, and from hence poſſibly came the Heatheniſh Fables, that their *Jupiter* came in the Habit of a poor Man to *Philemon*, who entertaining him, *Jupiter* made his Houſe a Temple, and the Owner, the Prieſt of it; and that *Apollo* coming as a Traveller to *Mydas*, and being kindly entertain'd by him, rewarded his Bounty with vaſt Wealth and Riches; tho' we have no warrant from Scripture to believe that Chriſt doth actually diſguiſe himſelf to us in ſuch ſhapes, and appears to us to try our Charity, yet it is no impoſſible thing, and we may piouſly believe it, thereby to encourage our ſelves to cheerful Contributions, leſt finding us hard-hearted, and ill-natured, covetous, and incompaſſionate, he deal with us, as *Jupiter* among the Heathens, is ſaid to have dealt with *Lycaon*, whom when

when he came to visit as a guest, and found cruel instead of being hospitable, he turned him into a Wolf. *Christ* hath threatned the hard hearted a worse, and stranger *Metamorphosis*, for they that will not be like him in doing good, shall be doomed to be like Devils, to mourn and lament as they, and to Eternal Ages too, for this is the Sentence, *Go into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat*, &c. Mat. 25. 41, 42.

12. *Let nothing discourage you from admiring those men who live in the Thoughts, and Contemplation of this future Judgment*; We admire men for their Parts, Abilities and Accomplishments; we admire *Aristotle* for his Learning, *Archimedes* for his Mathematicks, *Socrates* for his Gravity, *Absolom* for his Beauty, *Achitophel* for his Policy, *Saul* for his Tallness, *Arion* for his Musick, *Asahel* for his Nimbleness, the Men of *Benjamin* for their Skill in Slinging, *Darius* for his Gratitude, *Cicero* for speaking, *Virgil* for Poetry,

Urbino

Urbino for Painting, *&c.* but theſe are poor things for our Reaſon to admire; Men that live Day and Night in a ſenſe of this future Judgment, live continually in expectation of the Arch-angel's Trumpet, or the Summons of Almighty God, theſe are the Men, whoſe Praiſe we ought to ſhew forth in the Gates. Let others admire *Demoſthenes* for his *Rhetorick*, I will admire St. *Paul*; who ſo look'd at the things not ſeen, even at this Judgment, as to rejoyce in Tribulation, and though troubled on every ſide, yet was not diſtreſſed; though perplex'd, yet was not in deſpair; tho' perſecuted, yet was not forſaken; tho' caſt down, yet was not deſtroyed; appeared to the World, as ſorrowful, yet was always rejoycing; as poor, yet made many rich; as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſed all things, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7, 8, 18. 2 *Cor.* 6. 10.

Let others admire *Arceſilaus* for his Prudence, *Scipio* for his Fortitude, *Ariſtoclides* for his humanity, *Pythagoras* for his Philoſophy, I will admire the Primitive Believers, who ſtood in ſuch awe

awe of this Great Day, that their conſtant Thoughts and Contrivances were, how to reſiſt their Adverſary the Devil, and upon this account ſtood faſt in the Faith, quitted themſelves like Men, were ſtrong, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. The thoughts of that Day made them vigilant, ſober, heavenly minded, deſpiſers of the World; charitable, kind, tender-hearted, fruitful in all good Works, and why ſhould we delude our ſelves, or fancy we need not do ſo, or that they did more than they ought to have done? The Beſt of Men, the Wiſeſt Men, the Holieſt Men that ever lived, have been frighted, overawed, ſupported, preſerved in goodneſs by the contemplations of that Day, and therefore, if we are not, it's no ſign, that we are wiſer than they, but that we are more ſtupid; we are all ambitious of participating of their glory, and why ſhould we be afraid of taking the way, that led them to it? Theſe are the men, who chooſe the better part. Theſe are the men, who

though

though laugh'd at by the World, are a Crown of Glory, and a Royal Diadem in the Hand of their God; and for their Shame they ſhall have Double, and for their confuſion, they ſhall rejoice in their portion. Their light ſhall come, the Glory of the Lord ſhall riſe upon them: They ſhall break forth on the right Hand, and on the left, and in Righteouſneſs ſhall they be eſtabliſhed: They ſhall dwell on high, their place of defence ſhall be the Munition of Rocks; Bread ſhall be given them, their Water ſhall be ſure: Their Eyes ſhall ſee the King of Glory in his Beauty, they ſhall behold the Land, that is very far off; even the Land, where Rivers of Pleaſures flow, where no Tears are to be ſeen, no Sorrow to be found, no anguiſh to be heard of. Theſe are the Men which at laſt ſhall ſit down in the Throne of God, and having ſuffered Hunger and Thirſt with the Holy Jeſus here, ſhall Eat, and Drink at his Table in his Kingdom. Theſe Men will at laſt be look'd upon with greater fear and reverence, than now they are, and when

when the bruitiſh World ſhall ſee them advanced to the higheſt Seats of Bliſs, and behold that theſe which once were the moſt contemptible Creatures, ſhall judge the World with the Son of God, they will change their Voices, and with the *Maltheſes* be ready to call them Gods, whom but a little before they condemned, as Varlets and Villains.

I conclude this diſcourſe, with St. *Peter*'s exhortation, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. 15. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe, as ſome men count ſlackneſs, but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come, as a Thief in the Night; in the which the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the Earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up; ſeeing then, that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of Perſons ought ye to be in all Holy Converſation, and Godlineſs, looking for, and haſtening unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on Fire ſhall be diſ-*

ſolved,

ſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; Nevertheleſs we according to his Promiſe look for New Heavens, and a New Earth, wherein dwells Righteouſneſs; wherefore Beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and Blameleſs.

FINIS.